Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

SUBHAS BOSE

THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

M.C. GUPTA JAYTILAK GUHA ROY

EDITORS

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

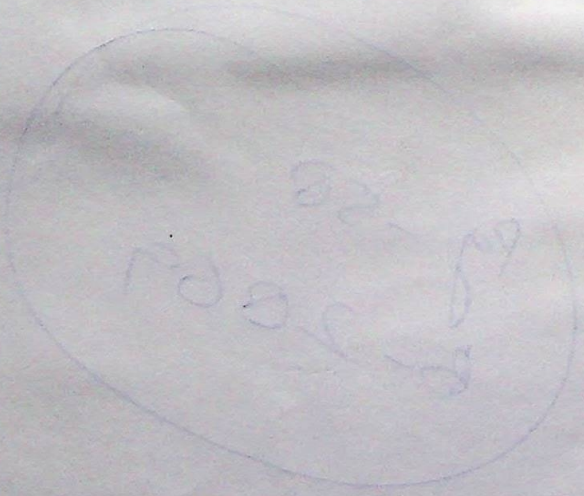
Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The volume is a modest endeavour to provide an objective evaluation of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's contribution to Indian independence and national reconstruction. It focuses on different aspects of Netaji's life, his mission and vision, as one of the most outstanding leaders of masses who led the battle against the mighty British imperial powers and its allies with unflinching courage and conviction. It also examines and analyses his personal and leadership qualities which made him a symbol of sacrifice and source of inspiration to youth, his ideas and actions which hold sway even 50 years after independence, particularly regarding economic planning for national reconstruction on socialistic lines, foreign policy, unity and integrity of India, empowerment of women, mass participation in planning, establishment of secular democracy, etc., as perceived by eminent persons in public life and distinguished scholars.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

SUBHAS BOSE : THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

SUBHAS BOSE : THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

M.C. GUPTA JAYTILAK GUHA ROY
Editors

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Indraprastha Estate, Ring road, New Delhi 110 002

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

S-v-en
22/6/09

DEDICATED
TO
INDIA'S FREEDOM FIGHTERS
WHOM WE ALL SALUTE
AND
FONDLY REMEMBER

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PREFACE

THE PRESENT volume is the outcome of a national seminar organised by IIPA on the historic day of *August Kranti Divas*—9th August 1998—to pay its tribute to one of the greatest leaders of Indian freedom movement, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The seminar owes its origin to an eminent freedom fighter and parliamentarian, Prof. Samar Guha, who suggested, in a letter to Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Chairman, Standing Committee IIPA, that a premier Institute of the country like IIPA should organise such a seminar at the national level which could be a retrospect on Netaji's life and an objective evaluation of his contribution to India's freedom struggle and nation building. We are indeed grateful to Prof. Samar Guha, Shri S.B. Chavan, Chairman IIPA and Shri T.N. Chaturvedi for their active encouragement and support in organising the seminar. Their addresses to the Seminar and Shri Chaturvedi's steering thereof were our great assets.

We consider it our bounden duty to express our deep sense of gratitude to Shri Krishan Kant, Hon'ble Vice President of India and President, IIPA and Capt. (Dr.) Lakshmi Sahgal, Commander, Rani Jhansi Regiment of INA who not only graced the seminar with their benign presence but also enlightened us with their thought-provoking addresses. These addresses have been included in the present volume which would enrich and illuminate its contents.

The volume also contains some research based papers contributed by learned and distinguished scholars to whom we owe our thanks and gratitude.

The volume also carries a chronology, a genealogical tree of Subhas Bose's family, a select bibliography and eight selected speeches of Subhas Bose which, we hope, would be useful for the scholars and historians and all those who are keen to know about the life and works of this great man.

Our special thanks are due to all our dedicated colleagues in IIPA, especially Prof. K.N. Kabra, Dr. S.N. Suri, Registrar, Shri M.K. Gaur, Joint Editor, Shri B.K. Suri, Librarian, Shri S. Majumdar, Deputy Librarian, Dr. B.B. Malhotra, Deputy Registrar and Dr. B.D. Singh for providing us academic, administrative and other necessary support in organising the seminar and also in bringing out this volume.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Shri Krishan Kant—Hon'ble Vice President of India and President, IIPA.

Capt. (Dr.) Lakshmi Sahgal—Commander, Rani Jhansi Regiment of INA; prsently political and social activist based in Kanpur.

Shri S.B. Chavan—Formerly Union Home Minster; presently Member of Parliament and Chairman, IIPA.

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi—Formerly Comptroller and Auditor General of India; presently Member of Parliament and Chairman, Standing Committee, IIPA.

Shri M.C. Gupta, IAS (Retd.)—Formerly Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Government of India and Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana; presently Director, IIPA.

Dr. Jaytilak Guha Roy—Reader in Criminal Justice Administration at IIPA.

Shri Pradip Bose—Author, political analyst, activist in the Indian and international socialist movements and nephew of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Prof. Kamal Nayan Kabra—Professor of Economics at IIPA.

Shri Jay Bhattacharjee—Corporate analyst, member of Delhi Stock Exchange and grandson of Late Beni Madhav Das, the respected teacher of Netaji.

Dr. Bidyut Chakrabarty—Reader, Department of Political Science, Delhi University and author of the book, *Subhas Chandra Bose and Midddle Class Redicalism, 1928-40*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Prof. Asok Mukhopadhyay—Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta.

Shri Yatish Mishra—Research Scholar based in New Delhi.

Shri S. Majumdar—Deputy Librarian at IIPA.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Subhas Chanrda Bose, affectionately acclaimed by his countrymen as *Netaji*, was one of the greatest leaders of Indian freedom movement. He was a profond and versatile thinker, a great visionary and philosopher with historical foresights, wisdom and imagination. He was first and foremost a *Karmyogi*—a man of action—who influenced his generation in India as well as in the world not so much by his writings as by his action. For him, plans and programmes, ideas and ideology were of value only if they were to be used as the basis for action. And the over-riding objective of all his actions were to liberate our beloved motherland from the bondage of colonialism and build the nation on the strong edifice of justice, equality and fraternity.

Subhas had God-gifted qualities of leadrship. That is why, within such a relatively short life span, marred by frequent illness and incarceration in British prisons, he was able to prove his mettle in multifarious activities with indelible dedication and determination, courage and conviction, vigour and vision, seriousness and strong sensitivities—whether it was flood relief work in North Bengal, managing municipal administartion as the Chief Executive Officer or as the Mayor of Calcutta Corporation, organising the National Volunteer Corps of the Congress, mobilising mass movements against the British Raj, playing the role of "an unofficial Ambassador of India's freedom" during his exile in Europe, founding the Provisional Government of Azad Hind on foreign soil or commanding the military operations of the Azad Hind Fauz as the army of truly united and integrated nation.

In all these activities, Subhas not only displayed extra-ordinary qualities of leadership but also showed eagerness and sincerity to make any sacrifice for the motherland. It was, therefore, quite natural that Subhas became one of the most beloved and respected leaders of the people of India. he stood as the symbol of sacrifice and source of inspiration to hundreds of thousands of young men and women all over the country.

Subhas Bose was perhaps the first national leader who took concrete steps to evolve a comprehensive framework for planned development of India to be taken up after the attainment of independence. As the President of Indian National Congress in the historic Haripura session in 1938, he appointed the National Planning Committee under the Chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru to accomplish this important task. The committee made a deatiled study of the future planning framework,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

which subsequently proved to be of great relevance for the planners of independent India.

Subhas was also the pioneer in providing a realistic concept of India's foreign policy. In this sphere, he was not moved by ideology alone but emphasised that foreign policy should be determined primarily by the practical consideration of how it served India's interests to achieve freedom by taking advantage of international power politics on the eve of World War II. In his Haripura address, Subhas suggeated that our foreign policy "should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its State". In this context, he gave the example of Soviet diplomacy and observed: "Though Soviet Russia is a Communist State, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist States and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should therefore aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who would feel sympathetic towards India".

Subhas believed in the fundamental unity and integrity of India based on her dynamic diversity of life and language, history and heritage, geography, religion and culture. He had an idealist vision of Indian nationalism. He was an apostle of 'pure and undefiled nationalism'. He considered communialism as the greatest threat to nationalism. His greatest achievement lies in making his Azad Hind Government and Azad Hind Fauz the living symbols of communal harmony and national unity. The Azad Hind Government and the War Council of Azad Hind Fauz comprised representatives from all parts of India and from all communities.

Netaji's faith in the power and potentiality of Indian women and his long cherished desire to involve them actively in India's freedom struggle found the ultimate fulfilment in the establishment of the Rani Jhansi Regiment of Indian National Army under the command of Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal.

Subhas wanted to make India really great by building up a political democracy on the pedestal of a secular society based on equal opportunities for all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Netaji's India is yet to be established. Today, half a century after India's freedom and in the fiftieth year of our Republic, the challenges we face in our nation-building may be different, but Netaji's ideas and vision continue to have their relevance in building up a strong and unified India on the edifice of secularism and social justice.

The present volume is a modest endavour to provide useful inputs for an objective evaluation of Netaji's contribution to India's freedom struggle and nation building.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

A METEOR ON INDIAN SKIES

In the openeing contribution, *Shri Krishan Kant* describes Subhas as a meteor who rose up the Indian skies, illuminated the horizons far beyond them and then vanished just before reaching its zenith. He recalls two incidents from the unfinished autobiography of Netaji to show how evoluation in the mind of Subhas began quite early in his life. He also gives a brief account of various facets of Netaji's concern for post-independent India and his vision of India as a significant mover of a new world order in post-colonial era. In his concluding observation, *Shri Kant* refers to three powerful words—ITTEFAQ, ITTEMAD, AUR QURBANI—*i.e.*, Unity, Faith and Sacrifice, with which Netaji inspired the INA, and which, as *Shri Kant* believes, will still help take India to her 'destined greatness'.

A GEAT VISIONARY

Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal gives an authentic account of the extra-ordinary qualities of Subhas as a soldier-statesman and also as a great visionary. She had the 'great good fortune' to be associated with Netaji in his final struggle for the complete independence of India. She refers to the conversation between Subhas and his members of the cabinet of the Povisional Government of Azad Hind during which Subhas envisaged economic domination of America in the post World War II international secnario which has now become a reality with American hegemony in world politics and international trade, particularly after the collapse of Soviet Union. She also gives us a glimpse of Netaji's vision of foreign policy of the future independent India. She laments that Netaji could not put his dreams of building a strong and free India into a shape, and concludes that it should be "our earnest endeavour to carry on the task he left unfinished."

A BORN HERO OF HEROES

Shri S.B. Chavan pays his tribute to Netaji as a 'born hero of heroes' for his unflinching courage and conviction. He finds in Netaji a rare combination of Shivaji's geniusness in patriotic passion, pure nationalism and understanding of military starategy, commitment to communal unity and communal harmony like Akbar the Great, and quality of a leader in battlefield, like Lord Krishna of *Mahabharat*. He also presents a brief account of Netaji's achievements as a born revolutionary leader and a great visionary.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

DESHNAYAK

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi presents a brief account of Subhas Bose's life in three different phases: *(i)* the formative phase when he was influenced by his teacher, Beni Madhav Das and Swami Vivekananda's Writings; *(ii)* his political career which carried him to be the President of the Indian National Congress and culminated in his emergence as *Deshnayak* followed by hid exemplary efforts to galvanise public opinion against British imperialism and his thinking about socio-economic problems of the country; and *(iii)* fighting the last battle against British imperalism from the foreign soil after leaving India.

A GREAT INDIAN

Shri M.C. Gupta highlights Subhas Bose's urge for social reform and his undaunted spirit to fight injustice and foreign rule in India. He describes Bose's Haripura address as "an outstanding policy document, covering the national agenda", and examines relevance of this national agenda in the socio-economic and political milieu of contemporary India. To him, Bose's philosophy of strong centre with equally strong states, his idea of converting India's vast population from a liability to an asset and his vision of economic planning are of greater relevance today. *Shri Gupta* presumes at the end that if Subhas Bose were with us today, he too might have shared some of the emerging thoughts and initiatives as irrelevance of rigidity in socio-economic planning of the erstwhile Soviet model, Chinese euphemism of 'market socilalism' and the changing role of the state in the creation and sustenance of civil society become more pronounced.

FROM SUBHAS TO NETAJI

Dr. Jaytilak Guha Roy examines Netaji's contribution to India's freedom struggle by analysing and unfolding, in chronological order, *eight significant phases* of his life and works. These are: *(a)* his deliberate decision to resign from the coveted ICS; *(b)* his debut on Indian political scene; *(c)* serving the Nation under Deshbandhu's leadership; *(d)* leading youths in Indian freedom movement after Deshbandhu's death: *(e)* his role as leader of radical nationalist forces; *(f)* providing an alternative leadership in place of the orthodox Gandhian leaders of the Congress High Command; *(g)* his collaboration with the Axis Powers; and *(h)* leading the last Indian War of Independence against British imperialism as Supreme Commander of INA and Head of Azad Hind Government.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The concluding part of *Dr. Guha Roy's* paper gives a glimpse of Netaji's vision for the Nation and for future free India. He laments that Netaji's contribution to India's freedom struggle and nation building never received due recognition from governments of free India. Nevertheless, he feels that in the hearts of his beloved countrymen, Netaji remains, and will remain forever, as the source of inspiration and the symbol of sacrifice and sincerity, courage and nobility.

CONTROVERSIAL IDEAS AND ACTIONS

Shri Pradip Bose, while giving his comments as discussant on *Dr. Guha Roy's* paper refers to three controversial ideas and actions of Netaji: *(i)* his differences with Gandhiji which led to his explusion from the Congress Party; *(ii)* his collaboration with the Axis Powers; *(iii)* his advocacy for an authoritarian regime in free India for a short period of time. Of these three controversial issues, *Shri Bose* observes that *Dr. Guha Roy* discusses the first two issues, but not the third one. He gives strong arguments and analytical explanations to reveal that these three controversial ideas and actions of Netaji were not too controversial but rather broadly correct.

PLANNING FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

Prof. Kamal Nayan Kabra makes a brief survey of some of the important writings, speeches and letters of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to highlight his pioneering role in giving planning context, meaning, direction and democratic credibility. After presenting the context in which Netaji's ideas of planning took shape, *Prof. Kabra* examines Bose's ideas of planning. He observes that "comprehensive social, national planning for social reconstruction and industrialisation as a systematic, organised way of responding to the onerous challenges faced by the national government immediately after the departure of the British clearly had its roots in Netaji's ideas".

PLANNING AS AN ADJUNCT TO PRICE MECHANISM

In his comments as discussant on *Prof. Kabra's* paper *Shri Jay Bhattacharjee* observes that the main point, which *Prof. Kabra* has brought out in his paper, is that Netaji thought of planning as an adjunct or supplement to the price mechanism, and this is what is called *market socialism* in many places in the world, particularly in the Scandinavian countries. The other points which, according to *Shri Bhattacharjee*, Prof.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Kabra has brought out in his study are: *(a)* concept of Subhas-Nehru-Mahalanobis Model of planning; *(b)* distinction between short-term and long-term programme; *(c)* concept of leadership from below or mass participation in planning; and *(d)* protection of Indian interests. In his concluding observation, *Shri Bhattacharjee* expresses his doubt that a true evaluation or assessment of Netaji would never be possible since there are too many vested interests in this country which would probably oppose it tooth and nail.

SUBHAS, INA AND THE AXIS POWERS

Dr. Bidyut Chakrabarty makes a critical study of the role of Subhas and the INA during the period between 1941 and 1945, and Bose's decision to join the Axis Powers. Based on his survey of various studies and historical documents, *Dr. Chakrabarty* observes, "notwithstanding Bose's genuine commitment to national liberation movement in India,...Bose seems to have been caught in a peculiar situation where he probably saw the problems and their remedies but failed to execute in the adverse circumstances. He lacked perhaps the skill or the opportunity to choose the right partner at the right moment". *Dr. Chakrabarty* concludes his study with the observation that "even though he fought from the wrong side of the fence, Bose's patriotism, sincerity and devotion to the cause of India's freedom made him a class by himself".

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF NETAJI'S IDEAS

Prof. Asok Mukhopadhyay analyses Netaji's ideas relating to planning for development, self-reliant socialism, nationalism and secularism and also his contribution in international statesmanship. In the contemporary context of international politics and globalised economy, in which independence and sovereignty of many developing countries including India, are now under threat from various agencies of neo-capitalism and neo-imperialism, *Prof. Mukhopadhyay* feels that Netaji's image as a revolutionary and uncompromising fighter against imperialism and colonialism would serve as a source of unending inspiration to the anti-colonial, anti-imperial and anti-capitalist forces throughout the world. He also observes that Netaji's socio-cultural and politico-economic ideas continue to have their relevance even in contemporary India.

The volume carries a chronology, prepared by *Shri Yatish Mishra*, which covers, by and large, the significant events of the life and work of Subhas Bose. It also contains a select bibliography on the main theme and eight selected speeches of Subhas Bose, which hopefully, would be found useful.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	vii
Our Contributors	ix
Editorial Introduction	xi
Netaji Subhas: A Meteor on the Indian Skies *Krishan Kant*	1
Netaji: A Soldier-Statesman and A Great Visionary *Laskhmi Sahgal*	5
Netaji Subhas: A Born Hero of Heroes *S.B. Chavan*	8
Deshnayak Subhas *T.N. Chaturvedi*	10
Subhas Bose: A Great Indian *M.C. Gupta*	13
Netaji's Contribution to India's Freedom Struggle and Nation Building *Jaytilak Guha Roy*	16
Discussant's Comments *Pradip Bose*	37
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Planning for National Reconstruction *Kamal Nayan Kabra*	41
Discussant's Comments *Jay Bhattacharjee*	57
Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian National Army and the Axis Powers, 1941-45 *Bidyut Chakrabarty*	61
Netaji's Ideas and Contemporary India: their Relevance Reexamined *Asok Mukhopadhyay*	80
A Chronology *Yatish Mishra*	90
Genealogical Tree of the Boses of Mahinagar	100
Prof. Samar Guha's Letter to Shri M.C. Gupta	102

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

SELECTED SPEECHES OF SUBHAS BOSE

APPENDIX I	THE HARIPURA ADDRESS	103
APPENDIX II	INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS	125
APPENDIX III	NATIONAL PLANNING	130
APPENDIX IV	MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM	133
APPENDIX V	THE TRIPURI ADDRESS	137
APPENDIX VI	VISION OF A FREE INDIA	141
APPENDIX VII	THE RAMGARH ADDRESS	150
APPENDIX VIII	ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE	156

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 165
S. Majumdar

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

1

NETAJI SUBHAS: A METEOR ON THE INDIAN SKIES*

Krishan Kant

TO LOOK at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is like looking at pristine purity. Like a meteor he rose up the Indian skies, illuminated the horizons far beyond them and just when a truly extraordinary life was reaching its zenith, he vanished. His absence from amongst us, and I consciously say absence and not death, like his presence, continues to stir all Indians.

For most Indians, Netaji's life and work are evaluated in the context of his personal sacrifice and unconventional methods, at least in the Indian milieu, in struggling against the British Raj in India. His approach, though fiercely patriotic, brought him in conflict with the traditional Congress leadership.

Even though at the surface there existed several differences in approach between Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji, at a deeper level, there was a synthesis in the vision of the Mahatma and Subhas Babu. This was the vision of an India free from the divisions of caste, language, religion and region, united by the thread of a sublime national identity. So deep was his conviction about the fundamental, transcendental unity of India, that he wrote and I quote: "Though geographically, ethnologically and historically India presents an endless diversity to any observer, there is none the less a fundamental unity underlying this diversity."

So firm was his resolve against the practice of the caste system, that as far back as 1928 he raised his voice for abolishing it altogether. He rejected the proposition that caste system could be allowed to remain after "humanising" it. Netaji then went on to add that if, in the short term, caste system cannot be abolished, then in order to attain complete equality, we must all be *Brahmins* or *Shudras*—and nothing in between.

Even the Hindu-Muslim problem, which had by that time started gaining momentum, was resolved in the INA by the strictest application of the concept of equality. The men and women in INA reflected India

*Inaugural Address, at the National Seminar on Netaji's Contribution to Indian Freedom Movement and Indian Planning on 9th August, 1998 at IIPA, New Delhi.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in a microcosm. Men of all faiths, willingly accepted dangers and death to save India in the only way they knew to serve—to fight for her.

Decades before the movement for feminism erupted in different parts of the world, Netaji applied the principle of gender equality in the INA. The Combative Unit of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was a bold, symbolic gesture towards asserting his belief in the equality of sexes.

It was his deep commitment towards promoting the essential unity of India that prompted Mahatma Gandhi to write and I quote: "The greatest achievement of the INA under the leadership of Netaji was to gather under one banner men of all religions and races of India and to infuse into them the spirit of solidarity and oneness, to the utter exclusion of all communal and parochial sentiments. It is an example we should all emulate."

The evolution in the mind of Subhas Babu, born into a rich family, began quite early in his life. Two unconnected but important incidents were to leave a deep impact on his life which ultimately resulted in, many years later, his resignation from the prestigious Indian Civil Service. It is important to recall these two incidents.

At the relatively young age of 17 years, when he was comfortably growing in the luxurious comforts of his rich home, the everyday sight of a decrepit beggar woman sitting in front of his house, begging for alms, shook him. It shook him irreversibly. Many years later in his unfinished autobiography, *An Indian Pilgrim*, Subhas Babu was to write: "I appeared to be so well off and comfortable that I used to feel like a criminal. What right had I, I used to think, to be so fortunate to live in a three storied house, when this miserable woman had hardly a roof overhead and practically no food and clothing? What was the value of *Yoga*, if so much misery was to continue in the world? Thoughts like these made me rebel against the existing system."

The second incident that shook him out of his idyllic existence was when he went to Cuttack during a college vacation. He went along with his friends on a nursing mission in nearby villages stricken by cholera, which in those days was a fatal disease. In the same unfinished autobiography he was to record that "a week's experience opened a new world before my eyes and unfolded a picture of the real India—the India of villages, where poverty stalks over the land, men die like flies and illiteracy is the prevailing order."

In 1921, while contemplating his resignation from the Indian Civil Service, in order to join the non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi, he wrote a series of letters from England to Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, whom Subhas Babu was to later describe as his leader and political *guru*. One of his letters reflects

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

his true concern for post-independent India, when he recommends the need for a research department in the Congress Party. He wanted this department to study India's complex socio-economic problems and then suggest realistic solutions for overcoming them. Freedom, he felt, would lack real meaning if political freedom was not accompanied by social and economic freedom.

Equally importantly, he believed that attaining this economic and social freedom was possible only through a non-dogmatic and non-doctrinaire approach. Even though he described himself as "a full blooded socialist", he had the courage to articulate his belief in idealogical flexibility, ironically at a time when Jawaharlal Nehru publicly stated in 1933 that the world has only two choices—fascism and communism. Nehru asserted his own preference for communism. Netaji promptly issued a statement, disagreeing with this approach, for mankind he believed, had not reached the end of its evolutionary process. This reflected a profound difference between Netaji and several other giants of the freedom struggle. While he remained inflexible in his idealism and uncompromising in values and principles, he was entirely flexible and open-minded about the methods for realising this idealism. He remained unconvinced of the ability of any one socio-economic system to solve India's diverse and complex problems, and thus the flexibility in his approach, in order to synthesise the best from every thought and every system.

It was this reality which reaffirmed his belief in India evolving and adopting a system which is born out of her own indigenous needs, in the background of her own history and in the context of her own geography. Today, when marketisation, liberalisation and globalisation are dominating the political agenda, this "unity of opposites" has become crucial in determining the future of India.

Netaji's vision of India resulted out of his deep understanding of the forces of world history, and India in this vision was a significant mover of the new world order, not isolated from it. England, France, Germany and Russia, he said, have made their own distinct contribution to the world civilisation and culture. In the next phase of human history, he believed India shall be called upon to make the most significant contribution to world civilisation and culture.

Fifty years after independence, in spite of achievements which are not insignificant, the vision of Netaji may yet appear a distant dream. Despondency may, at times, overtake the indomitable Indian spirit. Despair may, at times, overshadow our quest for greatness. At times like these, to enable the spirit to soar and for our determination to remain unshakeable, we may remind ourselves of the words Netaji

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

wrote in his own hand on 14th of May, 1935: "Through life and death let us carry in our hearts the following motto which fell from the lips of one of the greatest sons of India, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh: "I should like to see some of you becoming great—great not for your own sake, but to make India great—so that she may stand up with head erect among the free nations of the world. Those of you who are poor and obscure—I should like to see their poverty and obscurity devoted to the service of their motherland, work that she might prosper—suffer that she might rejoice". These words were penned by Netaji while presenting the book *Indian Struggle* to the father of the Mauritian Nation and the former Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam who had helped Netaji in proof-reading of the book.

Six decades ago, Netaji inspired the INA with three powerful words which were to become their credo, "ITTEFAQ, ITAMAD AUR QURBANI", Unity, Faith and Sacrifice. Unity among all Indians, unshakeable faith in India's destiny and sacrifice for the cause of India's greatness. Just over a half century ago these words inspired hundreds of thousands of Indians to sacrifice their homes, their families, indeed their lives, inspired by their unshakeable faith in India's destined greatness, united in their endeavour to free India of oppression of any kind—political, economic or social.

Today, half a century since India became a free and sovereign nation, the challenges we face are different. In a world which is moving at breakneck speed, where the identities of individuals, families, societies, ethnicities and nations are undergoing rapid change, when sheer economics is dominating every other human agenda, where the individual is getting overwhelmed by individualism, we need to pause and think. We need to reflect deeply on the alternative vision we have to create for India, distinct from the present global trend in which material enrichment is simultaneously resulting in moral and spiritual poverty. In the evolution of such a vision India does not require her children to sacrifice their lives, for today there is no alien power who has taken away her freedom. What India needs from Indians is just a small sacrifice—sacrifice of a little greed, sacrifice of a little ego, sacrifice of a little selfishness, sacrifice of a little laziness. Millions of such little individual sacrifices, in the true spirit of sacrifice, can help India attain her destined greatness. ITTEFAQ, ITTEMAD AUR QURBANI—Unity, Faith and Sacrifice will help take India to her destined greatness. This shall be the greatest tribute we can pay to the memory and sacrifice of Netaji.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2

NETAJI : A SOLDIER-STATESMAN AND A GREAT VISIONARY*

Lakshmi Sahgal

I HAD the great good fortune to be associated with Netaji in his final struggle for the complete independence of our country. We are all familiar with Netaji's role in the early days of the freedom struggle. From his student days he pursued single-mindedly the goal of struggle for India's complete independence. He sacrificed all his personal desires and ambitions to achieve this goal. He was actually of a very philosophic frame of mind, and so he would have liked to be like Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, retired to some *ashram* in the Himalayas or elsewhere and meditate. But he felt that it was a very selfish thing, because he would be meditating only for his own salvation, while most of his countrymen were in poverty and misery due to foreign rule. So he decided to work for them, and not for his own emancipation.

He was a very loyal and earnest member of the Congress. He was, however, always ahead in his thinking and planning. It was not just the current struggle that had his attention, but the future of independent India.

He displayed his talents as an administrator when he was the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Even today the comprehensive reports that he made out at that time are preserved. One of his major concerns was regarding the drainage and sewage disposal of Calcutta which he felt would be totally inadequate to the growth in population and industrialisation. He drew up the blue print which unfortunately remains unimplemented till today. On all his trips abroad he made it a point to visit Municipal Corporations and take valuable hints from them.

On being elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1937, he started the Planning body with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Chairman. In 1997, the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Shri Madhu Dandvate published the guidelines laid down

*Key-note Address.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

for India's planning by Netaji. Needless to say, these have not been implemented. They consist of: (1) eleviation of poverty, (2) equitable land distribution, (3) universal primary education, (4) equal status for women, and (5) communal harmony, etc.

Netaji was firmly convinced that Britain would be involved in World War II. He felt that was the time when we should make all out efforts to gain our independence. There was nothing morally wrong against taking advantage of the enemy when he was being weakened by a major war. However, Mahatma Gandhi totally opposed such an idea and Netaji was forced to leave the Congress and then leave the country to achieve his end. His natural inclination was to seek help from Soviet Russia. That was why, after his *great escape,* he landed in Russia by way of Kabul. It was only when that help was not forthcoming that he was obliged to go to Germany. He however, had no hesitation in telling Hitler that he had no admiration for Fascism and was well aware of Hitler's racist policy. As soon as he realised that the Germans would be on the retreat, he insisted on going to South East Asia. Unfortunately, he arrived there too late. However, he was able to build up the INA and unite all the Indians of South East Asia irrespective of caste and creeds. He made us all feel that we were Indians first and Indians last. Even the Japanese were inspired by him and the Prime Minister of Japan Gen. Tojo, a rigid militarist declared: "Subhas Chandra Bose was not just an Indian leader but a leader of Asia".

He formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind not for his own glorification but to give the INA a legal standing. This fact was later made use by Bhulla Bhai Desai when he argued the case of the three INA officers who were tried in the Red Fort. During the frequent cabinet meetings that Netaji held after forming the government, I had the privilege to attend them as a Minister. In the first meeting, we declared war against Great Britain and America. Some of the members of the Cabinet asked Netaji: "Why do you declare war against America, as she is not our enemy, and only Britain is?" Netaji said: "At present they are not, but think of the future. After this war, when Britain is definitely going to lose all her powers, the leading imperialist power in the world will be America; and America will enlarge her empire, not through military means, but by economic means. Because, America is a single country in the world which has not been affected by the war, in as much as there was no fighting on any American soil; her industries and technology are absolutely in tact. She has gained largely also from those eminent scientists who defected from Germany to America". Netaji said further: "This economic domination by America will be much more serious and much more dangerous for our people, than any military action.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

So, our people should be warned from now to be beware of American imperialism". This was said in October 1943. I leave it to you to judge whether Netaji was correct or not.

His greatest achievement was in breaking the allegiance of the British-Indian army and convincing the officers and men that their first allegiance should be to their country and not to the British rulers. This is the one fact that convinced the British authorities that they could no longer hold India in bondage and would have to grant freedom in some from or the other.

Regarding the foreign policy of the future independent India, Netaji said: "We must strengthen our ties with our neighbours and consider ourselves part of Asia. We should also strengthen our ties with the African people and the Middle East." He also said: "Naturally, when we are strong like that, the Western countries will seek our friendship; we do not have to go to them with a begging bowl." He felt that in our foreign relations after independence we should move closer to Japan, and perhaps Germany, for our industrial and technological know-how should not depend only on Britain and probably America.

As far as the language is concerned, Netaji was in favour of simple *Hindustani* being the *lingua franca* of India, written in Roman alphabet. He said that this is very easy to learn and it would also solve the problem of typewriters, morse code and so on. He proved it also. In three months, every member of the INA and Rani of Jhansi Regiment and every member of the civilian organisations were able to converse in *Hindustani* and understand simple *Hindustani* as well as words of command. So, when this had happened there, it is definitely something that we should have taken advantage of it after our freedom.

Alongwith the fighting force of INA Netaji also organised a civil cadre of engineers, doctors, public health experts who would be able to take charge of captured areas within India as the retreating British would do every thing they could to destroy all civil amenities and leave the population to diseases and other hardships.

It is, however, the tragedy of our country that Netaji could not put his dreams into practice. The dreams he had of building a strong and free India. It should be our earnest endeavour to carry on the task he left unfinished.

JAI HIND

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3

NETAJI SUBHAS: A BORN HERO OF HEROES*

S.B. Chavan

TODAY IS a red-letter day in the annals of India's freedom movement. Fiftysix years ago, in 1942, it was on this day, the Quit India Movement was launched against the British imperialism under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. This movement got momentum when Azad Hind Fauz led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose reached Indian soil on 19 March 1944. The British Government was thus attacked from both sides—from inside India and from outside India—and ultimately collapsed as was envisaged by Netaji. I am happy that the Indian Institute of Public Administration has chosen this auspicious day to organise this national seminar to pay its tributes to Netaji Subhas.

Subhas Chandra Bose, popularly known and admirably acclaimed by his countrymen as 'Netaji', was the uncompromising fighter against British imperialism in India. He was the 'Patriot of the Patriots' and 'born hero of heroes' with unflinching courage and conviction. In patriotic passion, pure nationalism and understanding of military strategy, he was a genius like Chhatrapati Shivaji. In his commitment to communal unity and communal harmony, he was like Akbar the Great. As the supreme commander of Azad Hind Fauz he led the battle against the mighty British imperialism like Lord Krishna of *Mahabharat*.

Netaji was a born revolutionary leader. That is why, he was able to lead the Indian National Army as a real revolutionary army despite its disability in terms of equipments, arms and ammunitions and other military requirements. It was under his supreme command that the Azad Hind Fauz and the Azad Hind Government were able to demonstrate for all times to come that people from different races, religions and regions of India could live together, fight together, dine and die together as brothers and sisters for the emancipation of motherland from the bondage of colonial power.

Netaji was also a great visionary. In his Presidential Address at the 51st Congress Session of Haripura in 1938, Subhas Bose presented a brief but clear plan for India's reconstruction after independence. He identified eradication of poverty, illiteracy, disease and scientific

* Presidential Address.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

production and distribution as the chief national problems and suggested to tackle them only along socialistic lines. He said that the very first thing which the future national government of India will have to do would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. To protect national unity of India he advocated for a strong central government through which all the minority communities as well as provinces will have to be put at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs. To solve India's economic problem he emphasised the need for agricultural development on a scientific basis, a comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-control, and also revival and protection of prospective cottage industries.

I am happy that the IIPA, which has to play an important role in nation-building as premier national institute of the country, has organised this national seminar to make an objective assessment of Netaji's contribution to India's freedom struggle and nation-building.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

4

DESHNAYAK SUBHAS*

T.N. Chaturvedi

WHEN WE look at Subhas Bose's life, it can be divided in three different phases. The *first* one was formative, till he joined the ICS, in which influence of his teachers in Orissa—especially Shri Beni Madhav Das, Swami Vivekananda's writings and so on—is clearly visible on him, besides many other spritual impulses. We know how the seed of patriotism grew in his youthful mind, the kind of courage that he showed at different stages of his early life, the outpourings of his mind in the letters that he wrote at that time from Cambridge to his eldest brother partcularly.

Then came the *second* phase, when he left the ICS, came back to India and met Gandhiji at Bombay and then, ultimately, he found that Chittaranjan Das we really the kind of person that he was looking forward to as his leader, despite his great affection and regard for Gandhiji.

This stage was also related to his political career which carried him to be the President of the Indian National Congress at Haripura and subsequently at Tripuri Congress, after which he left the Congress. We all are fully aware of the prevailing situation at that point of time. This was the stage when he was the darling of millions of people in this country. His charismatic personality, going round and speaking about the Forward Bloc, that image of his is still etched in the minds of many an old men at present. It was at this time that, as a law student, I had the opportunity to see him. Tagore referred to him as *Deshnayak, Rashtrapati* Subhas or *Deshnayak* Subhas. This was the period when he galvanised public opinion against the British rule, and this was the kind of universal perception about him during this period in India to which I need not allude.

The view that emerges is, here was a man who tried to look at the freedom struggle of India in the international context. I think only two other leaders did so. One was Lala Lajpat Rai. He was away from India during the World War I and when we see his writings of the period, we know about his thinking and his wanderings abroad to preach India's gospel of freedom. The second was Jawaharlal Nehru. The third was Subhas Bose, if you see his perspective of the international situation or

*Openi ıg observations.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

his analysis of the Indian freedom struggle in his memoirs. That was the time when he also tried to analyse the problems of this country in a wider context.

Not only in the Haripura Address, but also in his discussions with Dr. Meghanad Saha, in the press statement, in his address to the Ministers of Industry of the Congress, which was in power in seven Provinces—as they were known and they were called—he laid down the principles of planning, which have been found relevant even today, particularly the problems that he mentioned, including the question of population and what we call an unbalanced development. He talked of the problem of fair distribution of industries in all the areas of the country, so that the various sections of the people can benefit in the process of development itself by the achievement of freedom. For, he believed that it is the freedom struggle which probably will unfetter the arrested economic development of the country. That is why, for him, the struggle for freedom and the thinking about socio-economic problems of the country went hand in hand. Thus, the congress planning committee, with Jawaharlal Nehru as chairman was set up.

Then came his leaving India, the ordeal that the went through and the kind of enchantment that he had thrown over the entire public in India, which was the *final* phase of Subhas Bose's life. This was Subhas Bose as Netaji and the INA trying to mobilise against all odds for armed struggle for the freedom of the country.

Even at that time, in his addresses at different stages of India's constitutional development and his broadcasts to the country—sometimes, some of us were able to listen to some and sometimes these were circulated secretly—we find same kind of assessment of the situation in the discussions of the country's problems, that would be done now. That is why one can say that here was a person, for whom freedom struggle and national reconstruction, which is now called national planning and development, have just become a holistic process in the development of the people as well as the destiny of the people. He was a person who was always conscious of the greatness of the past and was fully aware of the problems of that particular moment. Then he also had the vision about the future this country would have. Not many are aware that Subhas Bose was elected uncontested as member the Central Legislative Assembly, but the then British Government dis not allow him to play that role, in spite of trenchant criticism even in the House of Commons. If Fate had been kind, Subhas Bose would have been both in the Central Assembly as well as on the ramparts of the Red Fort as "Dilli Chalo" was his rousing clarion call. It is one of the 'ifs' of history that will continue to reverberate through the corridors of time.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

It is a matter of rejoicing for us, it is also an occasion for introspection for us, that on the day that we pay homage to our martyrs and others who participated in the freedom struggle and underwent all sacrifices, we are present here to pay our humble homage to *Deshnayak* Subhas Chandra Bose, or Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose life of sacrifice, heroism and indomitable courage is an epic poem in the annals of India's freedom struggle.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5

SUBHAS BOSE: A GREAT INDIAN*

M.C. Gupta

SUBHAS BOSE was a real example of intellectual brilliance, with an urge for social reform and an undaunted spirit to fight injustice and foreign rule in India. He got selected for the Indian Civil Service in 1929, which was a highly coveted service. He joined it as a probationer, but resigned it within a few months, to serve the greater cause of India's independence; and the reason which he gave was that he could not serve two masters, one his motherland and the other the British ruler.

He took an active part in the freedom movement and we all know about his anti-British campaigns. He had a meteoric rise in public life and was nominated by Mahatma Gandhi to preside over the Fiftyfirst Congress Session in Haripura in 1938, at a comparatively young age of 41. He also presided over the 1939 stormy Tripuri Session, though he resigned because of his ideological differences with other Congress leaders. Yet, he left an indelible imprint on the minds of all, by his clarity of mind, his great vision and his unflinching dedication to the cause of India's freedom.

His Presidential Address at the 1938 Haripura Congress is an outstanding policy document, covering the national agenda. Even at that time, he said: "Our goal is that of an independent India and, in my view, that goal can be attained only through a Federal Republic, in which the Provinces and the States will be willing partners." He advocated for a strong Centre, but could foresee that regional aspirations and regional talent called for federal structure, which alone could sustain the Indian Nation. How prophetic he was.

In the same Address, he touched upon the fact that India had a vast population of 350 million at that time, which needed to be converted from liability to an asset. He also referred to the problems of the minorities, the question of secularism and he talked of social justice. He gave a call for *Poorna Swaraj* and also pronounced his faith in *Satyagraha*, though he made a plea for active resistance. He apposed the suggestion that the Congress should be dissolved, or should wither away,

*Welcome Address.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

after India became independent. In the same speech, he talked of India's national problems relating to poverty, illiteracy, disease, etc., apart from the large population.

Apparently, Subhas Bose had his own agenda, his own approach to secular India's independence. He talked of national planning to tackle the economic problems. Here we see the outstanding combination of a thinker, a visionary, an organiser and an achiever. He was truly a great man and a great Indian.

Netaji pleaded for Hindi as the national language, the common man's Hindi, which was a mixture of Hindi and Urdu. Incidentally, both Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel also pleaded for the same.

Unfortunately, he was not to be with us for long. A critic of English literature once said: "It is the tragedy of English poetry that Wordsworth lived too long and Keats died too young". It was India's tragedy to have lost Subhas Bose when he was still young and full of beams. Had he been with us after independence, he certainly would have walked tall among the tallest. We sorely missed him after independence.

A brief critique of the various major issues raised by Subhas Bose seems to be called for. The Centre-State relations have been a critical and sensitive issue in the post-constitutional era. While different views have been expressed on the primacy of the states, the overwhelming view seems to support Subhas Bose's philosophy of a strong centre with equally strong states. The Indian Constitution has mixed features, and has promoted a quasi-federal structure. While talking of Centre-State relations the debate often turns to the utility or misuse of Article 356 of the Constitution and the connected question of the method of appointment and the role of the Governor. These issues have to be addressed.

Bose's observation that India's vast population, which was 350 million in 1938, should be converted from a liability to an asset is of greater relevance today with our population touching one billion. The transformation of our teeming millions into an asset would provide the needed support to the society, would further trigger economic growth and would make India stronger. What is of importance is pushing through the agenda for people's empowerment.

His reference to India's national problems of poverty, illiteracy, disease, etc., was timely. While diseases have been checked for quite some extent and while the average longevity has increased impressively, the three basic problems of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment stare us in the face and each one of them has a close relationship with the most fundamental of our problems today, namely, the wild growth of population. The relationship between the three problems of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy on the one hand and the population

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

explosion on the other is both of cause and effect. It is time we come out strongly, clearly and openly on a sound population policy and its effective implementation.

Subhas Bose thought passionately of economic planning. In stressing the need for economic planning he was in the same league as Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who later promoted and set up the edifice for economic planning in India. Five decades later we seem to have reached a stage in our journey from where, perhaps, the philosophy of planning has to take a U-turn. The rigidity in socio-economic planning of the erstwhile Soviet model appears to be out of date today. Whether we call it market economy or use the Chinese euphemism of `market socialism', the fact remains that time has come to unshakcle the boundless energy and initiative of the common citizen and to reconsider the role of the state. The state shall continue to provide the basic goods, particularly the creation and sustenance of a civil society. But many of the other responsibilities which the Indian state has assumed over the last 50 years would need to be curtailed and minimised, if not totally given up. Subhas was a great visionary and a man of action. If he were with us today he too might have shared some of the emerging thoughts and initiatives.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

6

NETAJI'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND NATION BUILDING*

Jaytilak Guha Roy

NETAJI SUBHAS Chandra Bose was the only 'solider-statesman' in the annals of India's freedom struggle. As the greatest revolutionary freedom fighter of his generation in India and in the world, he became the living symbol of courage and conviction, devotion and determination, service and sacrifice for the motherland which in its totality constituted the very essence of India's struggle for freedom and 'national self-fulfilment'.

Subhas Bose was not just an epical hero. His elavation to the glorious status of *Netaji* was a long history marked by his unique understanding and accurate analysis of historical events and eventuality, his vision for the nation and the world, his extra-ordinary qualities of leadership, and his eagerness to make any sacrifice including the supreme sacrifice of life for the emancipation of his motherland from the bondage of colonialism. It began with his resignation from the coveted Indian Civil Service (which he passed in the fourth rank in order of merits) even before joining it when he was just 24 years old. Leaving the the "heaven-born" Service against the wishes of his beloved parents was indeed a difficult but deliberate decision. According to American biographer, Gordon, "The ICS decision was a rebellion both against the British and against his parents".[1] For young Subhas, it was also a choice between a life of ease and luxury, power and prosperity and a life of sacrifice and suffering, poverty and hardships. But he choose the second option so that he could serve his dear country as one of her people rather than as a member of an alien bureaucracy. And while taking this courageous decision, he was influenced by the glaring example of another great freedom fighter of India, Arabindo Ghosh. In a letter dated 23 February 1921, he wrote:

> Ever since the result of the ICS was declared, I have been asking myself whether I shall be more useful to my country if I am in the

---

*Discussion Paper,

[1]Leonard A. Gordon, "Themes in a Political Biography of Subhas and Sarat Chandra Bose", in Sisir K. Bose (ed), *Netaji and India's Freedom*, Calcutta, Netaji Research Bureau (hereafter NRB), 1975, p.9.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

> service than if I am not. I am fully covinced now that I shall be able to serve my country better if I am one of the people than if I am a member of the bureaucracy. I do not deny that one can do some amount of good when he is in the service but it can't be compared with the amount of good that one can do when his hands are not tied by bureaucratic chains. Besides,... the question involved is mainly one of principle. The principle of serving an alien bureaucracy is one to which I cannot reconcile myself. Besides the first step towards equipping oneself for public service is to sacrifice all wordly interests — to burn one's boats as it were—and devote oneself whole-heartedly to the national cause ... The illustrious example of Arabindo Ghosh looms large before my vision. I feel that I am ready to make the sacrifice which that example demands of me.[2]

BOSE'S DEBUT ON THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

The year 1921 when young Subhas made his debut on the Indian political scene was, to quote N.G. Jog, an eminent biographer of Netaji, "a veritable *annus mirabilis* in Indian history."[3] The entire nation was emotionally surcharged with Gandhi's promise of "*swaraj* (freedom or Home Rule) within a year". Bonfires of foreign cloths, boycotting of educational institutions and courts, picketing at liquor shops, public meetings, processions and demonstrations aroused an unprecedented spirit of nationalism among masses throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was against this historical backdrop that young Subhas landed in Bombay on 16 July 1921. Gandhi happened to be in Bombay at that time and Subhas called on him soon after he landed. It was the first meeting of India's two men of destiny. Subhas was, however, not impressed with the "Mahatma's magic" as happened to most of other leaders of India's freedom movement at their very first meeting. Subhas described later his first interaction with Gandhi in *The Indian Struggle:*

> ... There were three points which needed elucidation. Firstly, how were the different activities conducted by the Congress going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, namely the non-payment of taxes? Secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes or civil disobedience force the Government to retire from the field and leave

---

[2]Subhas Chandra Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unifinished Autobiography*, ed. by Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose, Delhi, Oxford University Press, (hereafter OUP), 1997 pp.111-12.

[3]N.G. Jog, "An Indian Pilgrim: 1897-1933", in Sisir K. Bose *et.al, A Beacon Across Asia*, Delhi, Orient Longman, 1973, p.12.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

> us with our freedom? Thirdly, how could the Mahatma promise 'Swaraj' (that is Home Rule) within one year— as he had been doing ever since Nagpur Congress? His reply to the first question satisfied me ... his reply to the second question was disappointing and his reply to the third was no better ... though I tried to pursuade myself ... that there must have been a lack of understanding on my part, my reason told me clearly, again and again, that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated and that he himself did not have a clear idea of the successive stages of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom.[4]

It was really amazing that Subhas, at that young age, was matured enough to understand and assess the inherent weakeness of Gandhi's technique, and the inconsistency in his plans and prgrammes. In fact, Bose's perception of Gandhi's method and technique remained the same even afterwards. During his conversation with Romain Rolland in Geneva on 3 April 1935, Subhas said, "We find from experience ... that Gandhi's method is too lofty for this materialistic world and, as a political leader, he is too straight-forward in his dealings with his opponents. We find, further, that though the British are not wanted in India, with the help of superior physical force, they have nevertheless been able to maintain their existence in India in spite of the inconvenience and annoyance caused by the Satyagraha movement."[5]

"This reservation on the Gandhian method and technique", obsereved Professor Bhattacharya very pertinently, "did not prompt Subhas to keep himself away from the mainstream national movement led by Gandhi."[6] On the other hand, he sincerely acknowledged Gandhi's 'phenomenal service to his country' and the historic role played by the Mahatma in converting the Indian National Congress from 'a talking body' into 'a living and fighting organisation.'[7] Another great Congress leader with whom young Subhas met after Gandhi was Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. Das and Motilal Nehru, wrote Jog, "were perhaps the only two Indian leaders then who could claim to be anywhere near the level of

---

[4]Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle 1920-42* (hereafter IS) in *Netaji: Collected Works*, Vol.2, Calcutta, NRB, 1981, pp.58-59.

[5]Subhas Chandra Bose, "What Romain Rolland Thinks," *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, September, 1935. See also Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose, *Netaji: Collected Works: Vol. 8,* Delhi, OUP, 1994, p.305.

[6]Buddhadev Bhattacharya, "Gandhi and Subhas", in Muchkund Dubey (ed), *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Man and His Vision,* Delhi, Har-Anand, 1998, p.26.

[7]For Bose's evaluation of Gandhi's role in Indian history, see *Subhash Chandra Bose, op.cit.*, Ch.XVI.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Gandhi ... The reputation of Das (as of Motilal Nehru) reached a new peak when both joined the non-cooperation movement and gave up their princely earnings at the Bar."[8] Unlike his first meeting with Mahatma, Subhas was 'captivated' by Deshbandhu at the first meeting itself. As Subhas recalled later: "During the course of our conversation I began to feel that here was a man who knew what he was about—who could give all that he had and who could demand from others all they could give—a man to whom youthfulness was not a shortcoming but a virtue. By the time our conversation came to an end my mind was made up. I felt that I had found a leader and I meant to follow him."[9]

SERVING THE NATION UNDER DESHBANDHU'S LEADERSHIP

Young Subhas could work under C.R. Das, his political philosopher and guide, only for a brief period of about five years (1921-25). Das entrusted him with a number of important assignments which Subhas had accomplished with solemn sincerity as a 'dashing' and dedicated lieutenant. He was made in charge of publicity for the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC) and head of the National Volunteer Corps of the Congress. He was appointed Principal of the newly started National College in Bengal and deputed by BPCC to organise flood relief work in North Bengal in 1922 . As Jog narrated the role of young Subhas during that period: "The able manner in which Bose discharged his many duties won encomiums from opponents as well as friends. The Anglo-Indian daily *The Stateman* ruefully remarked that while the Congress had gained such a capable man, the government had correspondingly lost a civil servant of high promise."[10]

In response to the Congress call for boycotting the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, Calcutta, like other Indian cities observed a *hartal* (closure of all business and public activities) on 17 November, 1921 when the Prince was scheduled to land in Bombay. Consequently, the government imposed a ban on Congress activities. The BPCC decided to start civil disobedience as a protest, and its President, C.R. Das, made Subhas in charge of the movement. Subhas pursuaded Deshbandhu's wife, Basanti Devi, to lead a batch of women volunteers. She was arrested and sent to prison. This inspired thousands of young men and women to join the movement. They courted arrest and there was virtually no room for them all in prisons. The government got panicked and arrested Chittaranjan and Subhas and sentenced them to six months' imprisonment

[8]N.G. Jog, *op.cit.*, p.14.
[9]*Subhash Chandra Bose, op.cit.*, p.60.
[10]N.G. Jog, *op.cit.*, p.15.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

on 7 February, 1922. This was the first of the eleven prison terms suffered by Subhas during the next 19 years.

In 1924 when Deshbandhu was elected as the Mayor of Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC), he appointed Subhas as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), that is, the head of the administration. As Subhas wrote later in *The Indian Struggle*[11]:

> Though my appointment to this important post at the age of twenty-seven was generally approved in Swarajist circles,[12] it did not fail to cause a certain amount of heart-burning in some circles within the party. To the Government it gave great annoyance and it was not without a great deal of hesitation that they decided to give their approval, as they were required to do under statute.

Under the dynamic leadership of C.R. Das and Subhas Bose, a number of new programmes were launched by the CMC to promote the welfare of the citizens and create a new civic consciousness. *Khadi* became the official uniform for the Councillors and Aldermen including the Mayor and also for the employees of the Municipality. Many of the streets and parks in Calcutta were renamed after India's greatest men. For the first time an Education Department headed by a distinguished graduate of Cambridge, K.P. Chattopadhyay, was set up. Free primary schools for boys and girls sprung up all over the city. Health Associations, financed by the Municipality, were started in every ward of the city by public-spirited citizens for creating health and sanitation awareness among the people. Dispensaries and infant clinics were installed by the Municipality in different parts of the city for providing free medical aid to the poor and needy people and their children. For new appointments, the claims of Muslims and other minorities were recognisd for the first time. Last but not the least, the new regime of the CMC discontinued the previous custom of giving civic receptions to Viceroys, Governors and officials and started giving civic receptions to Nationalist leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru during their visit to Calcutta.

---

[11]See *Subhash Chandra Bose, op.cit.*, pp.104-5.

[12]The Gaya session of the Congress was held in 1922 under the presidentship of C.R. Das, With the rejection of Das's proposal for council entry by the orthodox followers of Gandhi who constituted the majority of the delegates, Das resigned the presidency and also membership of the Congress and, with the support of Pandit Motilal Nehru, organised the 'Swaraj Party'. Within a short time this new Party made so impressive strides that it was able to get resolution passed much against the wish of the 'no-changers' at the special Congress session in Delhi in September 1923 enabling Congressmen to take part in the ensuing elections to the legislatures. The Swarajist triumph was complete when towards the end of 1924, Gandhi himself approved this programme of giving fight to the British government from within the legislature.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

As Subhas wrote later: "People for the first time began to look upon the Municipality as their own institution and upon Municipal officers and employees as Public Servants and not bureaucrats."[13]

Bose's superb ability as an administrator was demonstrated during his short tenure as the CEO of the CMC. Jog narrated Bose's devotion to the civic work very aptly in the following words:

> He curtailed his political activities and was in his office or on inspection rounds of the different wards at almost all hours of the day. His dispatch of files amazed his subordinates, including departmental heads, most of whom were British. Bose was aware of the need to acquit himself well and also prove the credentials and capabilities of his party and the Congress.[14]

Subhas served as the CEO for hardly a year, after which he was arrested and ultimately deported to Burma which was then a part of British India. To quote Jog, "Only next to the Andamans, Burma with its remote location and alien atmosphere was a favourite choice of the government for banishment (with or without trial) of Indian political agitators."[15]

Six years later, when Subhas became the Mayor of Calcutta in 1930, he endorsed the same programme outlined by C.R. Das. As Gordon asks very pertinently, "would not such a programme still be appropriate for the Calcutta of today?"[16]

SUBHAS AFTER DESHBANDHU'S DEATH

While in Mandalay jail in Burma, Subhas got the shocking news of the premature death of his most beloved leader and political *Guru*, C.R. Das, on 16 June 1925. As Subhas wrote later in *The Indian Struggle*, "The disappearance of the towering personality of the Deshbandhu from the political arena was for India a colossal misfortune. The Swaraj Party, which owed so much to him, was paralysed after his death ... The weakening of the Swaraj Party served to strengthen the forces of reaction in India and in England, while it let loose a flood of communal strife in India which had, up till then, been held back by the superior forces of Nationalism."[17]

When the nation needed Subhas to fill in the political vacuum caused

---

[13]See *IS*, p.106.

[14]N.G. Jog, *op.cit.*, p.20.

[15]*Ibid.*, p.21.

[16]Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, p.110. For further details on Bose's contribution. in civic work, see Manju Chattopadhyay, "Subhas Chandra Bose: An Architect of the Calcutta Corporation" in Muchkund Dubey (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.91-98.

[17]*IS*, p.124.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

by Deshandhu's death, Subhas had to laguish in Mandalay jail for nearly two more years. During this time, his health was seriously affected due to enforced solitude. He developed broncho - pneumonia and were also suspected of tuberculosis. As public pressure for his unconditional release mounted, the British government had to release him on 16 May 1927. Despite his unsatisfactory health, Subhas had to plunge into political activity soon after his release. He was elected President of the BPCC in place of J.M. Sen Gupta.

The Congress call for the boycott of the Simon Commission in December 1927 was taken up by the youth of India with enormous enthusiasm. Youth Leagues were constituted in a number of provinces under the Leadership of Subhas and Nehru. The First All-Bengal Conference of Students was held in August 1928 at Calcutta which was presided over by Nehru. After the Conference, students' organisations were set up all over Bengal and subsequently in other provinces as well. This year was also marked by country-wide unrest among industrial workers. And the end of the year saw Subhas as the GOC of the Congress volunteer corps. Bose's extra-ordinary quality of leadership was once again demonstrated when a 'well - drilled and uniformed body' led by Bose with his impressive uniform received acclamation and admiration from the public, the delegates and the President of the Congress session, Pandit Motilal Nehru.

AS LEADER OF RADICAL NATIONALIST FORCES

Bose's differences with the Gandhian outlook and method arose primarily due to his 'softness on violence' and his 'revolutionary connection'. To Gordon, "Bose saw Gandhi as the head of an older, reformist group of natianalists backed by wealthy capitalists."[18]

From the mid-1920s the Indian nationalists began to be influenced by socialist and communist ideology. Subhas and Nehru were the two prominent Congress leaders of that period who were ideologically attached to socialism, but did not join any formal liftist groups such as the Congress Socialist Party, the Radical Group led by M.N. Roy, or the Communist Party of India. Nevertheless, as Gordon observes: "these organised groups considered Bose and Nehru spokesmen for the left, important because of their wide political following ... Strains grew greater between the leftists and the rightists Gandhian as the 1930's progressed. The conflicts were over both issues and power. Gradually the Congress programme became more socialistic, but the organisation was still dominated by Gandhi's men".[19]

---

[18] *Supra*, n.1, p.13.
[19] *Supra*, n.1, p.14.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In 1930 when Subhas became the President of All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), a new linkage between the organized working class and the Indian National Congress was established. Under the leadership of Subhas, the AITUC adopted socialist policy and held a middle position between the rightist Trade Union Federation and the leftist Red Trade Union Congress. However, Subhas was never in favour of any split in the working class. In his presidential address to the AITUC in 1931, he declared AITUC as public property in which all unions were welcome to join and make their presence felt. However, his appeal fell on deaf ears and the differences in the workers' ranks continued to grow until the movement was split into several rival trade unions. Unfortunately, the divisive process continues even today.

In January 1932, Gandhi returned empty-handed from the Round Table Conference in London and called for the second civil disobedience movement. Subhas believed that this movement as envisaged by Gandhi would never force the Britishers to leave India unless it was reinforced with any militant programme. He, therefore, put forward an alternative programme to organise active non-cooperation of Indian people including workers and peasants to enforce complete boycott of the Britishers, including the stoppage of supply of food and all other essential commodities to them. As Lahri has observed very poignantly, "This militant content added to Gandhiji's non-violent civil disobodience programme, made Subhas Chandra the link between the national revolutionaries who were organising armed resistance against the British and the general masses of the people. This was the key role Subhas Chandra was to play in the turbulent decade of the thirties."[20]

Unfortunately, Subhas could not continue to lead the Indian masses much longer as he was sent to prison and enforced exile from 1932 to 1937 by the British government.

AN ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP

Subhas presided over the 51st Haripura Congress of 1938 and the 'stormy' Tripuri Congress of 1939. But owing to ideological differences with Gandhian leaders of the Congress High Command he had to resign. As Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, an eminent Congress leader wrote later (January 13, 1947): "This severance of connection from the Congress was a blow to him, but it also freed him .... to work on his own lines and in the short time that he had after his break from the Congress and before he left the country, he was not able to build up a strong organisation in the country,

[20]Abani Lahiri, "The Turbulent Decade of the 1930s: Subhas Chandra and the Indian Youth", in Muchkund Dubey (ed.) *op.cit.*, p.120.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

he had won sufficient young adherents to make his voice in the politics of the country effective and to influence indirectly the decision of the Congress."[21]

Between his resignation as Congress President in Calcutta on 29 April 1939 and his great escape from his ancestral home in Calcutta on the night of 16-17 January 1941, Subhas sought to provide his beloved countrymen with an alternative leadership at the national level in place of the orthodox Gandhian leaders or 'the old guard' of the Congress High Command. "This alternative," in the words of Sisir and Sugata Bose, "was based on a commitment to uncompromising anti-imperialism in the current phase of Indian politics and undiluted socialism once freedom was won."[22]

After his resignation from the Congress Presidency, Subhas founded the Borward Bloc with an aim to consolidate Left Wing forces of the Indian National Congress to resume and intensify the struggle against the British Raj in the coming years. In his signed editorial in the *Forward Bloc* dated 5 August 1939, Subhas wrote:

> In every movement that is living or dynamic, there is latent left - a latent 'antithesis', if you will. This latent Left Wing becomes manifest in the fullness of time and through it, further growth and development takes place...
>
> The Right Wing having refused cooperation with the Left we Leftist would be justified in surrendering to them on the plea of unity, only if the Right Wing still had a dynamic role to play. But it is unfortunately clear from the correspondence I had with Mahatma Gandhi in March and April last that he no longer thinks in terms of a coming struggle. The Ministers and their guides who now dominate the Congress do not contemplate a struggle either. To surrender to the Right under such circumstances ... would in reality amount to perpetuating stagnation and reaction within the Congress ...
>
> The time has therefore come for the Left Wing to differentiate itself from the Right and proceed to consolidate itself. When this is done, the Left will secure a majority within the Congress and then proceed to resume the struggle for independence in the name of the Indian National Congress. This is the task of the Left Wing today. To fulfil this task the Forward Bloc has come into existence.

---

[21]R.A. Kidwai, "Recollections and Reflections" in Shri Ram Sharma (ed.), *Netaji: His Life and Works*, Agra, S.L. Agarwala and Co. Ltd., 1948, p.142.

[22]Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose (eds.), *The Alternative Leadership: Subhas Chandra Bose, Netaji: Collected Works*, Vol. 10, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.xi.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In contrast with other leftlist leaders like M.N. Roy who wanted to break away from the Indian National Congress and also those who in the name of unity not take the risk of pressuring the orthodox Congress leadership towards 'greater internal democracy', Subhas considered his Forward Bloc to be an integral part of the Congress and his ultimate political aim was to convert the majority within the Congress to a radical leftlist stance. Even while reacting to the shocking news of 'disciplinary action' against him by the Working Committee barring him from holding any elected office within the Congress for three years, he wrote in a statement dated 19 August 1939:

> I shall cling to the Congress with even greater devotion than before and shall go on serving the Congress and the country as a servant of the nation. I appeal to my countrymen to come and join the Congress in their millions and to enlist as members of the Forward Bloc. Only by doing so shall we be able to convert the rank and file in the Congress to our point of view, secure a reversal of the present policy of Constitutionalism and Reformism and resume the national struggle for Independence, with the united strength of the Indian people.[23]

After the outbreak of World War II in Europe in September 1939 Bose made a serious attempt of what he called 'heart searching' to analyse the prevailing international situation and decide the future course of action for a most critical period in the history of India and in the world. As a great thinker and visionary, he felt the need to integrate intuitive perception with rational understanding based on analysis, criticism and extensive study of history. As he wrote in an editorial in *Forward Bloc* dated 28 October 1939, "Where reason fails, instinct can guide us. Where instinct misleads by creating a mystical haze, reason can put us on the right path".

In pursuance with his heart searching, Subhas made an extensive tour throughout the length and breadth of the country between October and November 1939 so that he could bring about a confluence between what he called 'the individual-mind and the mass-mind.'[24] By December 1939 he launched his campaign against the vacillating and misleading policy of Congress leadership and the Congress proposal of 'a Constituent Assembly under the aegis of an imperialist Government' as 'a virtual substitute for National Demand for *Purna Swaraj*' (complete freedom). A genuine Constituent Assembly, he argued, could

---

[23]Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose (eds.), *The Alternative Leadership: Subhas Chandra Bose*, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

[24]For detailed account of his tour, see item 9 'Glimpses of My Tour', *Ibid.*, pp.20-31.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

only be convened "after the conquest of power, following a national struggle."[25] On this issue, he gave the examples of the Bolshevik withdrawal from the Russian Constituent Assembly in 1917 and the Sinn Fein rejection of Llyod George's Irish Convention. He also apprehended that the Congress High Command might come to an understanding with the British Government behind the back of the Muslim League.

During the Ramgarh Congress of 1940, Subhas organised a mammoth All-India Anti-Compromise Conference near the venue of official meeting. In his Presidential Address at that Conference[26], he reminded his Comrades, particularly those who then asserted that the congress was the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference, that "as soon as the War began, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to Shimla and informed His Excellency the Viceroy that he was in favour of rendering unconditional help to Great Britain in the prosecution of the War". He also asked them: "Do they not realise that Mahatma Gandhi being the sole dictator of the Congress, his personal views necessarily have a far-reaching implication? Have they forgotten that since the outbreak of War, the Congress Working Committee has sidetracked the main issue—namely, our demand for Purna Swaraj—by putting forward a demand for a fake Constituent Assembly?" He therefore declared unequivocally with his vision for India and the world: "The age of Imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and Socialism looms ahead of us. India, therefore, stands today at one of the crossroads of history. It is for us to share, if we so will, the heritage that awaits the world." And to achieve this, he called for a political consolidation of all genuine leftlists. "In the present phase of our movement", he explained, Leftists will be all those who will wage an uncompromising fight with Imperalism ... In the next phase of our movement, Leftism will be synonymous with socialism."

In his Nagpur address[27] as President of the second All-India Forward Bloc Conference in June 1940 Subhas gave a detailed account of the prevailing international situation and made the most comprehensive statement on the role and duty of the anti-imperialist forces in the context of 'the war between rival Imperalism.' Emphasising the need for national unity and solidarity to utilise the opportunity which international events had then presented to India, he declared, "National unity will presuppose unity within the Congress on the basis of a dynamic programme of struggle and at the same time unity between the congress and other organisations

[25] *Ibid.*, p.65.
[26] For full taxt of Bose's Ramgarh Address, see Appendix VII.
[27] For full text of Nagpur Address, see Appendix VIII.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

like the Muslim League." He called for the setting up of 'a Citizens' Defence Corps organized on an all-party basis' with the sole aim of 'preserving internal peace, harmony and goodwill." Military defence of subjugated India against any foreign power should 'concern the government only and not the people.' "What interest can we have in fighting for the perpuation of our own slavery", he asked, "for that is exactly what is implied in fighting to defend an enslaved India". He ended his address with a clarion call—'All power to the Indian people, here and now'.

In his pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity in Bengal Subhas launched a movement on 3 July 1940 for the removal of the Holwell Monument which had stood in a public square at Calcutta for 150 years as a reminder of the nation's slavery. Although the movement was successful, the British government seized this opportunity to put Subhas behind prison bars. This was his last spell in prison from 3 July to 5 December 1940 when he was released from prison but put under round-the-clock surveillance at his home on Elgin Road. It was from here that he made his 'great escape' on the night of 16-17 January 1941 for fighting his last battle against the British Raj from abroad. After a long and perilous journey through 'a dragnet of British policemen, spies and informers', Bose arrived in Berlin on 4 April, 1941.

SUBHAS AND THE AXIS POWERS

Bose's collaboration with the Axis Powers was subject to mud-slinging propaganda by the allied Powers particularly Britain and America. The pro-Soviet Communist Party of India which then cooperated with the British in the name of 'People's War' did not hesitate to brand this great hero of India's freedom struggle as a 'quisling'. Even Nehru disapproved this tactical line of Subhas and in a reported speech in the middle of 1942 in Assam, he declared that while he greatly admired Subhas as a courageous Indian patriot, he would not hesitate to oppose him with all his strength if Subhas entered Assam along with the army of Fascist Japan. But the fact remains that Subhas chose the Axis Powers as his main allies mainly for two reasons.

First, his one aim in life was how to overthrow the British Raj from the Indian soil, and to fulfil this, he worked from the age-old premise that 'enemy's enemy is friend'.

Second, after his great escape, he was in search of a suitable place from where he could have the best possible opportunities of working for Indian independence. Soviet Russia would have been his first and natural choice because of his ideological inclination to Socialism. But with his great vision, he could realise earlier in 1937 that after the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

death of Lenin and the elimination of Trotsky, Soviet Russia under the guidance of Stalin was no longer interested in stirring up revolution all over the world but only in building up Socialism within the Soviet frontiers.[28] Nevertheless, after his great escape Subhas contacted the Soviet authorities first. As one of his eminent German associates, Alexander Werth, wrote: "Perhaps, Bose would have gone even to Moscow if the world situations were different and if the Soviet authorities had shown some eagarness to help him in his work when he contacted them in Kabul."[29] Hence, it was the prevailing international situation during World War II which compelled Subhas to seek help from the Axis Powers. Nevertheless, as "a born leader of leaders,"[30] Subhas knew that Indians themselves would have to fight the final battle against British imperialism and prepared his planning for revoluation accordingly during 1941-43. In his congratulatory message from Berlin to the second conference of Indian revolutionaries at Bangkok on 15 May 1942, Subhas said:

> ... The experience I have gained during the last eighteen months has convinced me that in our fight against British Imperalism, the Tripartite Powers are our best friends and allies outside India ... But the emancipation of India must be the work primarily of Indians themselves ... We, who form the vanguard of the national army, feel however that the time will soon come when it will be necessary to take up arms in the final stage of the struggle...[31]

It is also to be noted that despite his collaboration with the Axis Powers, there are enough historical evidence which clearly reveal that Subhas never played the role of a stooge in the hands of the Axis Powers. Nor did he compromise with his self-dignity and the interests of his country. As Chattopadhyay, an eminent Communist historian, observed in a frank and forthright manner:

> ... It has to be admitted by comunist historians that the assessment of the Indian communist movement about Subhas Chandra Bose being a kind of a quisling of the Axis Powers, was utterly wrong

---

[28]Subhas Chandra Bose, "Europe—Today and Tomorrow," *The Modern Review*, September, 1937.

[29]Alexander Werth, "Planning for Revolution 1941-43," in Sisir K. Bose. *et.al.* (eds), *op.cit*, n.3, p.9.

[30]As Subhas was once described by India's another great revolutionary freedom fighter, Rash Behari Bose.

[31]See Fred Saito and Tasuo Hayashida, "To Delhi! To Delhi! 1943-45" in Sisir K. Bose, *et.al.* (eds), *op.cit*, p.155.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and has not been borne out by historical evidence in later years. Rather all evidence known to this day clearly indicates that Subhas Chandra Bose, even in very difficult and unfavourable conditions, kept intact his independent stand and refused to become a cat's paw in the hands of either Hitler or Tojo. The clearest evidence of this is his refusal to allow the Indian Legion to be used against Aung San and the AFPFL in Burma after their anti-Japanese resistance struggle started on 27 March, 1945.[32]

AS SUPREME COMMANDER OF INA AND HEAD OF AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT

The most significant contribution of Subhas to India's freedom struggle was to lead the Last Indian War of Independence against British imperialism as Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army (INA), and Head of the Azad Hind Government. During his exile in Germany between April 1941 and February 1943, Subhas organised INA comprising of about seven thousands army personnl. In 1943 Subhas was invited by the Indians in East Asia to organise and lead another INA comprising of British Indian Army personnel and Indian civilians over there. Netaji was informed by the german authority that in view of the danger involved in crossing big oceans, there was only 5 per cent chance of his safe arrival to Singapore. Netaji replied that 5 per cent was too much, if there was 1 per cent chance for his safe arrival he would be ready to take it.[33]

As a matter of fact, Netaji's 90-days perilous and prodigious submarine voyage from Germany to Japan via Sumatra through enemy infested seas was, in the words of Ayer, "a chapter in itself, revealing his extraordinary physical courage and fortitude. His submarine could have been detached by enemy submarines any moment during those 90 days, and Netaji could have been sent to the bottom of the seas by one hit with a torpedo. But he had taken the deliberate risk. He always carried his life in the palm of his hand." [34] According to Japanese biographers,

---

[32]Gautam Chattopadhyay "Subhas Chandra, Indian Leftist Movement and the Communist Party", in Muchkund Dubey (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.87. This observation of Chattopadhyay is based on Documents at G.D.R. Archives at Potsdam and other research papers.

[33]See Lieut. Ram Lakhan Singh, "A Solider's View of His Supreme Commander", in T.R. Sareen (ed.), *Forgotten Images: Reflections and Reminiscences of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Delhi, S.S. Publishers, 1997, p.159.

[34]S.A. Ayer, "Netaji's Unique Courage", in T.R. Sareen (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.144.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

> Through the entire annals of World War II, this was the only known submarine-to-submarine transfer of passengers in an area dominated by enemy air and naval strength.[35]

Subhas arrived in Tokyo on 13 June 1943. Japan was at that time locked in a 'life and death combat' with the allied forces and was concentrating all her energies on winning the war. She was in no mood to think about India and her Independence. Nor did she really want any distractions. But, as Ayer observes, "by the sheer force of his personality, Netaji persuaded the Japanese Government to give serious thought and attention to extending the maximum possible aid to the Indian National Army to march across the Burma-India border to give fight to the british entrenched in Indian soil"[36]

From Japan, Subhas arrived in Singapore on 2 July 1943. Eventually, on 15 February 1942, wish the surrender of Singapore, the 45,000 Indian soldiers in the British army were handed over to the Japanese as prisoners of war. It was, therefore, natural that on the Asian soil the INA was launched in Singapore. The majority of the Indian prisoners of war joined the mainstream of the INA with Gen. Mohan Singh as its Commander-in-Chief.

On 4 July, the historic Conference of representatives of Indian Independence League (IIL) was held at the Cathay Cinema in Singapore where Rash Behari Bose handed over the Presidency of the League to Subhas. Thus, Subhas accepted the dual responsibility of the Presidency of the IIL and the Generalship of the INA. On the next day, he reviewed the INA and announced its existence in the world.[37] Then, on 9 July, Subhas addressed the first public gathering in Singapore. A record crowd of sixty thousand people, comprising not only Indians, but also Chinese and Malays, stood to hear him in the pouring rain:

> The time is now ripe for us to defend India's pride and glory. We must shed our blood and sacrifice our lives for the independence of India. In the next offensive against our enemy, it is the Indian National Army that must be in the frontline of battle. If we obtain the independence of India through the sacrifice of only the Japanese solders, then that independence would be worse than slavery.[38]

The audience was captivated by the fiery and fighting speech of Subhas, but more so the Indians who finally found a person who only

---

[35]Fred Saito and Tasuo Hayashida, *op.cit.*, p.162.

[36]S.A. Ayer, *op.cit.*, p.144.

[37]*On to Delhi* (a Collection of Wartime speeches by Subhas Chandra Bose published by the IIL), p.37.

[38]See M. Gandhi Nathan, "My Memories of Netaji and the INA", in T.R. Sareen (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.173.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

could lead them at that historically critical point of time. "The moment the speech ended", recalled an Ex. INA Cadet, the air was rent with jubiliant cries of `Long live revolution' (Inquilab Zindabad) and `Long Live Free India' (Azad Hind Zindabad). Cries of `Netaji Ki Jai" (a title bestowed on Subhas) also reverberated through the crowd."[39] At last, Subhas rose to the glorious status of `Netaji' To many of his close associates in INA, Subhas as Netaji was an altogether different person. In the words of Lieut. Singh, "As I have found there is a great diference between Subhas Babu "as a Ladder and Netaji, when he was the Supreme Commander of the INA'. It may rightly be described as the diference between Gopal Krishna of *Brindaban* and Lord Krishna of *Mahabharat.*"[40]

In Singapore, almost every Indian resident donated money and valuables to their beloved Netaji and an all-women auxiliary corps of the INA was created quickly which later on emerged as Rani of Jhansi Ragiment under the command of Capt. Lakshmi Swaminathan Sahgal. As two Japanese biographers of Netaji have observed, "Netaji's decision to make the INA Asia's first regular army to accept women in its ranks bewildered old-fashioned Japanese officers. Traditionally the Japanese considered war to be men's business and refused to establish women's auxiliary corps ... Some Japanese officers expressed misgivings, saying they did not wish to see the inclusion of women cause laxity of discipline in the INA. Later developments and the complete absense of any such laxity in the INA effaced all such misgivings and enhanced Japanese respect for Netaji's leadership."[41]

In British perception too, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was nothing more than a propaganda unit of the INA. However, like Japanese the Britishers had also to change their view afterward. As Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal recalled in her memorirs, "When the British occupied Malaya and Burma, their Intelligence Officers interrogated members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment more out of curiosity than anything else. They quickly had to change their minds that this was only a propaganda unit when they found themselves confronted by determined women, who could not be won over by threats or favours and who remained faithful to the pledge they had given Netaji when they had joined the Regiment. It was from these young women that the British came to know that the INA was not a puppet army formed of cowardly POWs, but a mighty force of Indians who were ready to undergo any trial in order to liberate their Motherland."[42]

---

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] Ram Lakhan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.158.

[41] Fred Satio, *et.al., op.cit.*, pp.182-3.

[42] Lakshmi Saghal, *A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist*, Delhi, Kali for Women, 1997, p.149.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

From Singapore, Netaji went on hectic tour of East Asian countries and returned to Singapore on 14 August 1943. On 3 September Netaji addressed a rally of 15,000 Indians at Penang and came back to Singapore five days later, when he heard the news of Italy's surrender to the Allies. Even this news of great disaster could not dampen his fighting spirit. Then came the historic day of 21 October 1943 when about 1,000 Indian representatives from all over the Far East assembled in Singapore and unanimously adopted his proposal for the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, and elected him as the Chief Executive of the Government. Netaji issued a proclamation as Head of the State, Prime Minister and Supreme Commander of the INA which read *inter alia:*

> ...It will be the task of the Provisional Government to lauch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the explulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. If will then he the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian People'.[43]

Two days later the Azad Hind Government received official recognition from the Japanese Government. Within a few weeks came recognition from the governments of Burma, Croatia, Germany, the Philippines, Nanking, Manchukuo, and Siam.

Organising an Indian National Army in foreign lands, equipping it with arms and ammunition, transport, food and other supplies and leading them into battle against the powerful Allied forces as the Supreme Commander on the one hand and heading a National Government in exile on the other hand was indeed a task of tallest order which a great patriot like Netaji could only perform with exemplary excellence, indomitable courages, indefatigable energy and commendable dedication and determination.

Another significant achievement of Netaji was to make the Azad Hind Government and the Azad Hind Fauj as the living symbols of communal unity. As Professor Samar Guha has observed very poignantly, "His Azad Hind Government was constituted of Indian representatives from all parts of the country and from all communities, on the credibility

---

[43]For full text of the Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind 1943, see Sisir K. Bose, *et. al., A Beacon Across Asia, op.cit.,* Appendix VII.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of their patriotic capability and dedication to the cause of the Indian revolution. A majority of the generals of the highest echelon of the Azad Hind Fauj happened to be Muslims ... The majority of the personnel of the supreme body of the War Council happened to be Muslims.... The Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christan officers lived together in the same barracks and dined together..."[44]

The INA, under the dynamic leadership of Netaji, entered India on the Eastern Front against unspeakable odds. Unfortunately with the defeat of Germany, the advent of the North East Monsoon and finally, with the signing of Armistice by Japan on 10 August 1945, the INA had to retreat from the Indian soil. Nevertheless, the British imperialism did collapse. The revolt in the Navy, the mass upsurge during the INA trial and other turbulent events between 1945 and 1947 ultimately forced the mighty British imperialism to leave India. It was perhaps for the first time in the history of mankind that a nation defeated in a war ultimately emerged as the winner, and the credit for such a miracle lies on a single soul, called *Netaji!*

NETAJI'S VISIONS FOR THE NATION

Netaji was not merely a leader and a solidier-statesman, but a great visionary too. He had a clear vision for his beloved nation. He was perhaps the only President of the Indian National Congress who presented to his countrymen a clear, if not detailed, plan of India's reconstruction after independence. In his Presidential Address at Haripura Congress of 1938, Netaji said:

> ...I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines. The very first thing which our future national government will have to be would be to set up a Commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction.[45]

In his plan of India's reconstruction Netaji laid emphasis on national unity as one of the immediate objectives. He visualised that unity in diversity would be the basis of an unified India in future and for this, she would require 'a strong central government' with adequate scope for 'local and cultural autonomy'. In his Haripura Address, he clarified his

---

[44]Samar Guha, *The Mahatma and the Netaji: Two Men of Destiny of India*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1986, p.112.

[45]For full text of Netaji's Presidential Address at Haripura Congress of 1938, see Appendix I.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

concept of national unity in the following words:

> While unifying the country through a strong central government, we shall have to put all the minority communities as well as provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs ... To promote national unity we shall have to develop our lingua franca and a common script.

As a great visionary, Subhas knew very well that Indian national unity could never be achieved without solving the problem of the minorities. Hence, he dwelt at length on this problem in his Haripura address, and reiterated the 1937 Congress resolution on Fundamental Rights which clearly stated that 'The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religious' and 'there should be no interference in matters of conscience, religion, or culture, and a minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.' Subhas was, therefore, not in favour of imposition of uniform civil code on minority communities against their wishes.

Netaji was perhaps the first and foremost leader of Indian freedom movement who visualised the urgent need for population control long before India attained her freedom. In his Haripura address, Netaji categorically said that 'for a free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population', and it will be desirable 'to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those already exist'.

For protection and promotion of national unity, he also emphasised the need to direct the process of national reconstruction after independence on 'socialistic lines' so that the 'have-nots' are benefitted at the expense of the 'haves'.

Netaji wanted multi-party democracy to prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one. He was also in favour of internal democracy or 'democratic basis' of political parties as that would only ensure that "leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below." Unfortunately, this did not actually happen in the democratic polity of independent India as a result of which devolution of power through the Panchayati Raj cold not be accomplished even 50 years after freedom.

India of Netaji's dream was a modern scientific India without which national unity could not be achieved. He wanted to bring the different parts of India closer to one another with the help of "such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films, television etc." He also advocated for 'a common educational policy' to foster 'a common spirit among the entire population'.

Netaji visualised that for India's reconstruction, eradication of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

poverty would be the principal problem, which would require 'a radical reform of our land-system, including the abolition of landlordism'. He also stressed upon liquidation of agricultural indebtedness by providing cheap credit facility to the rural population and through an extension of the cooperative movement.

To solve India's economic problem, Netaji emphasised the need for agricultural improvement on a scientific basis as well as a comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-control. Unlike Mahatma Gandhi who strongly opposed industrialization, Netaji with his modern outlook and progressive thinking, could not discard modern industrialism altogether, and yet at the same time, suggested to devise means to minimise its evils and explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries wherever they would have prospects of their survival against the inevital competition of factories.

Netaji emphasised the role of the youth and women in the nation building exercise in free India. Speaking at *Rashtriya Stree Sabha* in Bombay in 1929, he said that free India would have to be built by the youth of the nation and in this work, the participation of women was necessary.

The nature of Netaji's dream for free India could be well understood in the following obserevation of a British biographer Hugh Toye: "In considering this there is to be remembered his predominant feeling for the unity of India and his sense of the ingrained, vested evils which possed her ... The ills could be removed, the many social and religious components held together and India turn into a modern industrial democracy only by a very strong authority acting on a well-made, long prepared plan."[46]

The Azad Hind Government Proclamation, signed by Netaji on the historic day of 21 October 1943 also provides a glimpse of his vision for free India in the following lines:

> ... It (The Provisional Government of Azad Hind) guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, treating all the children of the nation equally and transcending shall the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the part.[47]

---

[46]See Editor's Note in Sisir K. Bose (ed.), *Netaji and India's Freedom, op.cit,* pp.vii-viii.

[47]Fred Satio, *et.al., op.cit.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

EPILOGUE

It is most unfortunate that Netaji's contribution to India's freedom struggle and nation building never did receive due recognition from the governments of free India. Nevertheless, in the hearts of his beloved countrymen, Netaji remains, and will remain forever, as the source of inspiration and the symbol of sacrifice and sincerity, courage and conviction, nationalism and nobility. As Pattabhi Seetaramaya[48], whose defeat to Subhas at Tripuri Congress of 1939 led to the expulsion of Netaji from the Congress, wrote later in a frank and forthright manner:

> ... Greatness never advertises itself until it inevitably comes into the limelight of its own self-luminosity. Reflected light cannot be independent. They are planetary in character but the innate, self-born brightness of the stars emit their scintillations in their own time and lit the skies and the earth even from those astronomical distances which are not easily conceivable. Even so did Subhas Babu shine from after like a radiant orb in the blue firmament...
>
> ... Subhas will, I believe, be greeted by millions of men and women as, indeed, a Patriot and a Prophet of Resistance and Revolution!

[48]Pattabhi Seetaramaya, "Subhas the Immortal," in T.R. Sareen (ed.), *op. cit.*,pp.58-59.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS

Pradip Bose

MY COMMENTS will be confined to the paper by Dr. [illegible] Roy. I think it is very competently written, [illegible] inspiring. I would like to deal briefly with three of the [illegible] actions and ideas associated with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Looking back after sixty years, were those actions and ideas so very controversial or not?

Dr. Guha Roy has mentioned only two of these ideas and actions. He did not mention a third. The *first* relates to Netaji's differences with Mahatma Gandhi, which led to his expulsion from the Congress Party. The *second* is his collaboration with the Axis powers. The third, which he did not mention in his paper, is that Netaji pleaded for an autoritarian regime in the initial stage of a Free India.

What Will be our attitude to these controversies today? When Bose started his independent political action in 1926, he took the position that there should not be any compromise with the British government. He, along with Pandit Nehru, Srinivasa Iyengar, K.F. Nariman, the young radical leaders of the Congress Party, argued for complete independence as opposed to Dominion Status, which was the goal of the Congress party as that time; not only complete independence for India and also the severance of any connection with British imperialism. This was put into the *Independence Pledge*, which was adopted in 1930 because of the pressure from the so-called young radicals in the Congress Party. From 1930 to 1945, Bose's political line was against any kind of compromise with the British government. The basic difference between Bose and Gandhi was that the former was opposed to compromise, while the latter said "compromise is in my bones".

Bose openly criticised the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, he was also critical of the Congress participation in the Round Table Conference in London. He was opposed to the Government of India Act, 1935 and the Congress participation in Provincial Ministries in 1937. One of the main reasons why he decided to contest the election for the Congress Presidentship in 1939 was that he had information that a signification section of the Rightwing leadership of the Congress Party was trying to have some kind of [illegible] the issue of the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Federation, to which he was completely opposed.

In 1940 he organised an Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh. Thereafter, in 1941 he left this country. When Sir Stafford Cripps came to India with his plan in 1942, Bose broadcast from Germany emphasising that we must not accept Cripps' offer because it would be very damaging. Finally, when in June 1945 Lord Wavell put his plan, from Singapore Bose again warned the Congress leaders how dangerous it would be to compromise with the British government.

One of the questions often asked is: what was the logic behind his anti-compromise approach? Some of my academic friends tell me that being a Bengali, he was a very emotional man, but in politics one makes compromises. So, being a Bengali and being very emotional was the reason behind his anti-compromise stance. True, he was a Bengali and he was very emotional, but his reasons were intellectual. He was of the opinion that if you compromise with the British, then inevitably you will have to compromise with all the pillars of British imperialist establishment.

What were those pillars? The pillars were the bureaucracy, the police and the armed forces. Then you have the whole set of economic vested interest groups like landlords, the 600 and odd Princely States with *Nawabs* and *Maharajas*, communalist forces and finally, the rising capitalist class.

Any compromise with the British government would involve in the new set-up of Free India accommodation of these pillars of imperialism. Once this is done, it would be impossible to build a society in the interest of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people, who are poor, exploited and oppressed. That is the intellectual reason for his uncompromising struggle against British imperialism.

Unfortunately, in 1947 when the Mountbatten Plan was introduced, he was not there to oppose it, but what he was afraid of is exactly what happened. The country was divided on a religious basis, the culmination of the success of the divide-and-rule policy, which the British *raj* has followed. You have Free India where the police, the armed forces and the bureaucracy were kept intact. Land reforms were hardly carried out in large parts of the country and even then were very tardy in implementation. The whole administrative machinery remained colonial in character, education was not given the importance, very necessary for a free nation.

Although I cannot go into detail, let me give one illustration. We promised that within ten years illiteracy will be removed and primary education would be compulsory and free. This was mentioned in our Constitution in 1950. Why is it then that fifty years after independence,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

51 per cent of our population remains illiterate? This number is more than the existing population of united India in 1947. Was it too expensive? Was it because there were insufficient literate people to teach the illiterate? No. Whatever the rhetoric might be, the whole system, the Constitution, the Five Year Plans, the `socialistic pattern of society', `*garibi hatao*' (remove poverty)—all these were very nice soothing words, but in actual reality in fifty years only 10 to 15 per cent of the people have enjoyed the fruits of freedom. The other 85 to 90 per cent are either marginalised, or live below the poverty line.

There was a controversy of "anti-compromise", which led to his expulsion from the Congress Party, yet showed that he had the insight that if you compromise with British imperialism, the majority of the people are not going to benefit. These fifty years of freedom have proved the validity of the point that he was making at that time.

The second controversy arose from his collaboration with Axis powers, which Dr. Guha Roy has mentioned. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, before the beginning of World War II observed that he felt that Britain would rule for another thirty years. The fact remains however that British rule in India ended within eight years. How did thirty years become less than one-fourth of that time? I think you will agree, that it was the war in Europe, the German war against the Allied Powers which severely weakened both militarialy and economically the imperialist countries like France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain. Then came the entry of Japan into the war in the Far East and in three months the western imperialistic structures of the USA, Britain, France and the Netherlands were smashed. Even Lord Pethick Lawrence, who was the Secretary of State for India, admitted that freedom of India and other Asian nations came because of the defeat and weakening of the power of western imperialist countries. This is an objective fact of history today, but it was a very controversial issue at that time. My point here is that Sir Winston Churchill was the most outstanding anti-Bolshevist in Britain. He as the man, who as a British Cabinet Minister, took a leading part in organising foreign intervention to overthrow Lenin's government. But was soon as Germany attacked Russia in June 1941, he being the Prime Minister of Great Britain, which had the largest empire in the world, went to the help of Stalin, his ideological foe, for the defence of Britain. Why then should not a poor and enslaved country like India use similar tactics in order to gain freedom?

That is exactly what Bose did and for which he was mercilessly criticised. But today after fifty years, the facts of history show that

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

whatever controversies there might have been, it was the Japanese war which promoted the Indian initiative in Asia for freedom. Bose took advantage of that and I do not think that his action seem so "controversial" today.

The final point that I would like to make is regarding his ideas that an authoritarian regime should be imposed for a short period in Free India. He wanted radical land reforms, administrative reforms and educational reforms. If in early years of free India a parliamentary democratic system had been in place such reforms could not have been carried out effectively and this has been proved to be completely correct. Not only the freedom, which we won through compromise, thus weakening some of the basic values and principles of national struggle, but the whole system which emerged prevented the carrying out of essential reforms for which a strong government was needed. Gunnar Myrdal had called India 'a soft state' and a soft state cannot carry out radical reforms, essential for the social transformation of society.

The point is that Bose, unlike the Communists or the Fascists, did not believe in dictatorship in philosophical terms. His was a more pragmatic attitude which recognised the necessity of achieving certain specific goals in as short a time as possible. Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Prof. Kabra and others have pointed out, he believed in cultural renaissance, democracy and power of the people, but in order to be able to achieve the first few steps toward fundamental changes in society, a firm hand would have been needed. That is why he believed that in the initial stage of free India some kind of an authoritarian state was needed.

I think on this point also he seems to have been correct. If you examine the experience of authoritarian East Asian countries—whether Communist or non-Communist—they have been able to deliver in terms of education, health and other social amenities far more than we have been able to achieve in democratic India.

Bose had the insight and understanding which told him the best way of getting results at a particular time and he thought that the authoritarian system would be most fruitful. These, I think, are the main controversial ideas and actions with which he is associated. I would like to submit that fifty to sixty years after the events they do not seem too controversial, as he proved to be broadly correct in his thinking as later developments showed.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

7

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND PLANNING FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION*

Kamal Nayan Kabra

THE UNPARALLELED role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as a freedom fighter par excellence who made supreme sacrifices for the values he upheld is universally acclaimed. It is the role which seems to have overshadowed his other invaluable contributions as a visionary who had highly nuanced, uptodate and down-to-earth insights into the knotty problems facing colonised India. He said, "ours is a vast country with a population of 350 million. It is today a source of strength if we can only stand united and boldly face our rulers". (*Haripura Address*; HA hereafter, 1938, p.70) He visualised how the emerging international situation and nationalist mass upsurge were making it sure that in India before long the Sun would set on the British Empire. He confidently predicted, "I am one of those who think in terms of a Free India—who visualise a National Government in this country within the brief span of our own life". (*HA*, 78) He was sure that "constitutional devices and human ingenuity" may work for a time but ultimately "the empire is sure to break down under its own pressure". Presently when we are celebrating the centenary of this great nationalist leader, mobiliser, organiser and thinker with abiding commitment and capacity to face "national reconstruction" in which "it is the 'have-nots' who will benefit at the expense of the 'haves' (*HA*, 73), it is imperative that we examine his ideas of "social reconstruction" which was to be taken up immediately "after the capture of political power".

As a visionary with an intimate grasp of Indian socio-economic conditions and the frontline advances in social thinking and contemporary global developments, Netaji Subhas Bose elaborated on several occasions some of the critical elements of his thinking "about revolutionary social reconstruction" and "not industrial recovery but industrialisation". The kingpin of these seminal ideas was the invocation of planning, or rather in Netaji's own words, "National Social Planning". Given the heady debates of the thirties, this was to be expected.

*Discussion Paper,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In the following, we attempt to piece together some of the major, critical ideas of Netaji concerning planning for national reconstruction which were not only in step with the thinking prevalent globally during the 1930s but retain elements of relevance for the days to come.

Such an exercise certainly involves piecing together his ideas scattered at numerous places in his writings, speeches and letters. Thankfully, several published sources are available to facilitate this task. Instead of arranging his ideas chronologically, we try to put together his ideas concering planning gleaned from several sources into three distinct but inter-related aspects of planning or 'social planning'. (Kabra, 1997, 16) These aspects are:

(a) The agency and machinery of planning as a social-organisational device on par with price market mechanism, both being the products of modernity and industrialisation.

(b) The content or substantive strategic and programmatic content of planning, which embodies planners' response to general and specific issues needing intervention.

(c) The process and methodology of planning. This is basically a techno-economic question dependent crucially on the nature and form of the planning agency like the state or corporate business or NGOs, the nature of the tasks and objectives of planning and the availability of theoretical insights and precedents from experience.

II

THE CONTEXT

It is pertinent that we place an overview of Netaji's views in the context in which these ideas took shape. Being in the forefront of the leadership which was leading a mass movement for independence, and for realising the potential the emerging Indian nation was capable of, Netaji articulated his ideas with high degree of finesse.

This articulation of ideas on planning for him was no crystal-gazing, speculative, armchair exercise, or merely a part of the agitational politics, or a matter of scoring debating points. These ideas were a direct and pointed response to the major challenges facing India. He had a clear perception of India's problems and said, "our principal problem will be how to eradicate poverty from our country" and that "where poverty, starvation, and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty millions during a single decade". (*HA*, 76) It is evident that Netaji was making a concrete, concerted and concerned response to these myriad challenges. The Congress Ministries had assumed power in seven out of eleven Provinces of British India as

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

"an experimental measures" and many like Netaji accepted this partial sharing of power despite reservation. Netaji was the Congress President and was entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the Working Committee resolution regarding making co-ordinate efforts by the Provincial Congress Ministries concerning the transferred subjects. He was clearly of the view that "the Congress Ministries in the different provinces should, while in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the sphere of education, health, prohibition, prison reform, worker's welfare, etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have, as far as possible, a uniform policy for the whole of India". (*HA*, 78)

This was a matter of urgency for Netaji because he frankly admitted that "so far as the Congress Ministries are concerned, it would be well to note that the record of some of them has come upto people's expectation". During his tenure as the President of the Indian National Congress (INC) a number of deliberations among the provincial ministers were organised for improving the track record of the Congress Ministries. Most important of all, following a resolution of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) a National Planning Committee (NPC) with Pandit Nehru as its Chairperson was constituted.

Thus there was a fusion of certain ideas about social reconstruction by means of national, social planning and institutions like the NPC and provincial ministries endowed with atleast some authority and responsibility for planning. Since Netaji optimistically believed that with the turn of national and international events, the INC was at a striking distance from capturing power, giving concrete shape to the ideas about planning was an integral part of his thinking to prepare the congressmen for the future responsibilities. He held that "The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put into effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have won power can handle it properly". (*HA*, 74) Thus, his explorations regarding the role of planning for reconstruction and tackling India's problems were directed towards converting the congress from "an organ of mass struggle for capturing political power" (*HA*, 83), *i.e.*, for *Purna Swaraj* to "the governmental party" whose cabinet must "prove effective in putting their principles into practice" (*HA*, 77). For this purpose he maintained that "The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy", otherwise "the Congress Party may come to grief." (*HA*, 77) According to him the bureaucrats "outlook and mentality is in most cases neither Indian nor national and a national policy cannot be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality". (*HA*, 77) It is clear his ideas concerning planning faced squarely the question of implementation. What was, therefore, required was greater

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

independence from the bureaucracy and for this purpose the congressmen "should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy." (*HA*, 78). It is clear, Netaji was trying to exhort and educate his partymen by giving expression to his ideas about planning and reconstruction as concrete operational matters for the ensuing challenges. Thus these ideas were no abstract, theoretical flights of fancy without a time horizon and with no particular audience and practical possibilities in sight, though he was conscious of "the very narrow sphere of provincial autonomy" (*HA*, 74) in the 1935 Government of India Act.

With this background, we may try to piece together some of the salient ideas of Netaji concerning planning, which as the legacy of the Congress, exerted considerable influence on how we proceeded with these questions after 1950. It must also be noted that in the light of the circumstances prevailing in late 1930s, Netaji was quite clear that "it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction." (*HA*, 75). In addition to the limitations arising from "limited provincial autonomy", Netaji was realist enough to recognise that on these post-independence socio-economic issues, the Congress was far from a united, cohesive party. He cautioned that "Inside the Congress there are differences between the Right and the Left which would be futile to ignore." (*HA*, 87). Now it is history how over time these differences became acute and Netaji had to go in for floating the Forward Bloc of the Congress and the later split. He minced no words in stating: "I am not a member of the Congress Socialist Party. But I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning" (*HA*, 84). These developments in the country's politics and Netaji's Leftist position on these issues were inevitable influences on his conceptualisation and articulation regarding the processes for operationalisation of planning under conditions of external rule and post-independence.

In addition to the socio-political milieu, including grinding mass poverty, colonial exploitation and persistent inequities, certain other factors too need to be taken note of as providing the context and influences over Netaji's views regarding planning. According to Myrdal, in addition to the socio-economic environment, the personality of an individual and the main trends in prevalent social theories and ideas too play a part in giving shape to social beliefs and ideas of any person (Myrdal, 1969). Exploring both these factors in any reasonable details is simply not possible for a short essay; more so when so much historical research on Netaji remains to be undertaken. What is attempted here is a rather cursory exercise based on the incomplete autobiography of Netaji and some of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

his letters and speeches. It is, in its very nature, a fairly selective exercise and only some suggestive links are all that may emerge throwing some light on Netaji's understanding of and enthusiasm for social planning.

Netaji studied at the University of Cambridge and qualified for the ICS—a coveted service for the emergent literati middle classes in India as much then as now. Netaji explains how he reluctantly sat for the civil services examinations. On qualifying for the ICS he refused to take up this career. The security of assured bread and butter and status promised by the service held little attraction for him, a self-acknowledged "eccentric". (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 95). The call of conscience to work for the emancipation of the motherland was too irresistible for him. The subordination involved in a service career like that of the ICS was too heavy price for Netaji to pay. As he wrote in 1920, "it is not possible to serve one's country in the best and fullest manner if one is chained to the civil service. In short, *national and spiritual aspirations* are not compatible with obedience to civil service conditions". (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 96) It is clear that "national and spiritual aspirations" and an indomitable spirit of freedom were important parts of the personality of Netaji which made him challenge all ideas and icons his understanding and values would not find acceptable. He was not the one to speak any one else's language. How could it be that, according to Netaji, one's heart does not "bleed at the sight of the present deplorable state of Indians?" (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 125).

Moreover, Subhash Bose attempted an explicit formulation of his philosophical faith in his autobiography. He considered love to be "the basic principle on which to construct life." (*Ibid*, 108). Moreover, he considered "progress" to be the basic character of the folding process of nature. He wrote, "observation and study of nature point to the conclusion that everywhere there is progress. The progress may not be unilinear; there may be periodic setbacks—but on the whole, *i.e.*, considered from a long period point of view, there is progress.... And last but not the least, there is the necessity, both biological and moral to have faith in progress." (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 109).

Love, deep sense of anguish at the deplorable state of the countrymen, faith in the inevitability and normality of progress, despite short-run, temporary aberrations as the dominant values and guiding principles were complemented by an abiding democratic ethos and faith in people's power—the power of the common citizen. In a letter to a friend Subhas Bose wrote in 1920: "Swami Vivekanand used to say that India's progress will be achieved only by the peasant, the washerman, the cobbler and the sweeper. These words are very true. The Western World has demonstrated what the 'power of the people' can accomplish. The

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

independence from the bureaucracy and for this purpose the congressmen "should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy." (*HA*, 78). It is clear, Netaji was trying to exhort and educate his partymen by giving expression to his ideas about planning and reconstruction as concrete operational matters for the ensuing challenges. Thus these ideas were no abstract, theoretical flights of fancy without a time horizon and with no particular audience and practical possibilities in sight, though he was conscious of "the very narrow sphere of provincial autonomy" (*HA*, 74) in the 1935 Government of India Act.

With this background, we may try to piece together some of the salient ideas of Netaji concerning planning, which as the legacy of the Congress, exerted considerable influence on how we proceeded with these questions after 1950. It must also be noted that in the light of the circumstances prevailing in late 1930s, Netaji was quite clear that "it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction." (*HA*, 75). In addition to the limitations arising from "limited provincial autonomy", Netaji was realist enough to recognise that on these post-independence socio-economic issues, the Congress was far from a united, cohesive party. He cautioned that "Inside the Congress there are differences between the Right and the Left which would be futile to ignore." (*HA*, 87). Now it is history how over time these differences became acute and Netaji had to go in for floating the Forward Bloc of the Congress and the later split. He minced no words in stating: "I am not a member of the Congress Socialist Party. But I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning" (*HA*, 84). These developments in the country's politics and Netaji's Leftist position on these issues were inevitable influences on his conceptualisation and articulation regarding the processes for operationalisation of planning under conditions of external rule and post-independence.

In addition to the socio-political milieu, including grinding mass poverty, colonial exploitation and persistent inequities, certain other factors too need to be taken note of as providing the context and influences over Netaji's views regarding planning. According to Myrdal, in addition to the socio-economic environment, the personality of an individual and the main trends in prevalent social theories and ideas too play a part in giving shape to social beliefs and ideas of any person (Myrdal, 1969). Exploring both these factors in any reasonable details is simply not possible for a short essay; more so when so much historical research on Netaji remains to be undertaken. What is attempted here is a rather cursory exercise based on the incomplete autobiography of Netaji and some of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

his letters and speeches. It is, in its very nature, a fairly selective exercise and only some suggestive links are all that may emerge throwing some light on Netaji's understanding of and enthusiasm for social planning.

Netaji studied at the University of Cambridge and qualified for the ICS—a coveted service for the emergent literati middle classes in India as much then as now. Netaji explains how he reluctantly sat for the civil services examinations. On qualifying for the ICS he refused to take up this career. The security of assured bread and butter and status promised by the service held little attraction for him, a self-acknowledged "eccentric". (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 95). The call of conscience to work for the emancipation of the motherland was too irresistible for him. The subordination involved in a service career like that of the ICS was too heavy price for Netaji to pay. As he wrote in 1920, "it is not possible to serve one's country in the best and fullest manner if one is chained to the civil service. In short, *national and spiritual aspirations* are not compatible with obedience to civil service conditions". (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 96) It is clear that "national and spiritual aspirations" and an indomitable spirit of freedom were important parts of the personality of Netaji which made him challenge all ideas and icons his understanding and values would not find acceptable. He was not the one to speak any one else's language. How could it be that, according to Netaji, one's heart does not "bleed at the sight of the present deplorable state of Indians?" (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 125).

Moreover, Subhash Bose attempted an explicit formulation of his philosophical faith in his autobiography. He considered love to be "the basic principle on which to construct life." (*Ibid*, 108). Moreover, he considered "progress" to be the basic character of the folding process of nature. He wrote, "observation and study of nature point to the conclusion that everywhere there is progress. The progress may not be unilinear; there may be periodic setbacks—but on the whole, *i.e.*, considered from a long period point of view, there is progress.... And last but not the least, there is the necessity, both biological and moral to have faith in progress." (*An Indian Pilgrim*, 109).

Love, deep sense of anguish at the deplorable state of the countrymen, faith in the inevitability and normality of progress, despite short-run, temporary aberrations as the dominant values and guiding principles were complemented by an abiding democratic ethos and faith in people's power—the power of the common citizen. In a letter to a friend Subhas Bose wrote in 1920: "Swami Vivekanand used to say that India's progress will be achieved only by the peasant, the washerman, the cobbler and the sweeper. These words are very true. The Western World has demonstrated what the 'power of the people' can accomplish. The

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

brightest example of this is—the first socialist republic in the World, that is, Russia. If India will ever rise again—that will come through the power of the people. "(*An Indian Pilgrim*, 179) He then goes on to describe the three *Sawarnas* as people whose days (of dominance) are numbered and that "the strength and sacrifice (of the *sudras*) will bring about India's progress". One can see how class and caste coordinates converged in his views over the power of the people. It was in 1920!

It seems to follow that some of the important parts of Netaji's personality, values, commitments and understanding of historical reality made him veer towards accepting and advocating planning—democratic, people dominated, comprehensive national planning—as a powerful response to India's deep-seated maladies. True, as we try to explain elsewhere as well, planning of Netaji's conception was not the narrow economistic planning, (he rarely added the prefix 'economic' to planning) nor his concern was confined to economic development as it is commonly understood in the bulk of economic writings concerning development.

As is well-known, Netaji Bose had an exposure to the best of Indian and Western education and at the same time his family's deeply religious environment, other early life influences and pursuits and the impact of the writings of Swami Vivekanand seem to have had moulding influence on him. He had travelled widely and had a deep understanding of contemporary world developments which are clearly reflected in his writings and political understanding. These influences seem to have made him very open to the dominant ideas of his day.

Planning was certainly a front-runner among the emerging social science, ideas and theories during the 1930s. The World capitalist system had experienced a severe jolt by the Great Depression. The anarchy of capitalism as reflected in trade cycles had eroded the faith of the man on the street as also of the experts in the efficacy of price-market mechanism—the invisible hand. The intellectual arena was full of debates over the relative efficacy of market mechanism *vis-a-vis* the visible hand of planning. Von Mises, Hayek, Maurice Dobb, Dickinson, Lange, Lerner, etc., were engaged in intense polemics over planning and market. The Marxist challenge to neo-classical economics was not confined to the theoretical arena. Not only the Soviet experience was indicating how catching up industrialisation could be attained in a short period, but even the recovery in the West involved the visible hand of the state in a highly demonstrative manner. Netaji was an alert witness to these catalysmic changes. His deep commitment to the revolutionary reconstruction of India made him a votary of planning something which must be adopted on the very morrow of independence. What were his ideas about planning and what precise form did they take are what we discuss in the following section.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

III

THE IDEAS OF PLANNING

As mentioned above, end 1930s made it clear to a perspicacious mind like that of Netaji that Indian independence was around the corner. The freedom struggle in India had deep socio-economic roots and commitments. As a result, freedom was regarded as the inauguration of an era of reconstruction and transformation. The Indian National Congress as the most representative vanguard of the freedom movement strove consciously to elaborate the socio-economic content of the unprecedented mass awakening, mobilisation and assertion epitomised by India's struggle for freedom. As one of the most courageous and popular leaders of the freedom movement, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose recognised the need for initiating planning for reconstruction among the very first tasks awaiting the national government. He devoted a major part of his Haripura Presidential address to an elaboration of "some of the principles according to which our future social reconstruction should take place" (*HA*, 75). It may be noted that "social reconstruction" is the word Netaji selected for describing what was popularised in the post-war period as growth and development following the lead given by some of the early industrialised powers.

Social reconstruction is clearly an all-encompassing holistic expression, rather than just an economistic expression of limited materialistic cravings. In retrospect one can say that the kind of vicissitudes which becaused the fate of 'development planning' in India like the emascubtion of development planning by the 1990s (as dramatised, for instance, by a paper in the ESCAP journal entitled "India's Planned Departure from Development Planning: Some New Insights", by Partha Gangopadhyay, 1997) were to an extent the result of making planning exclusively an economic affair and GDP growth a substitute for social reconstruction. Thus, it is clear that the later day choice in favour of growth and development *vis-a-vis* social reconstruction was much more than a matter of terminological preferences.

The heritage of Netaji defined our task as social reconstruction and advocate the agencies and instrumentality of planning for the purpose. He was emphatic that "*the very first thing which our future national government will have to do would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction*". (*HA*, emphasis added, 75). One wonders if a clearer statement of this vintage specifying at the same time both the task of planning and the agency of undertaking this task could be easily encountered.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The Planning Commission of Netaji's conception brought society in the forefront as the major agency for social reconstruction. It was also visualised that the plan of reconstruction would be comprehensive. It is clear that he did not speak of centralised planning. In fact, as a supporter of municipal socialism and a federal polity giving "local and cultural autonomy" he specifically suggested a multi-party democracy honouring the fundamental rights of the citizens as spelled out at the Karachi Congress and the democratic organisation of the party as bulwarks guarding against a totalitarian turn. His prophetic formulation deserves to be quoted as it continues to be relevant. He maintained that "the democratic basis of the Congress party will prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people *from above* but are elected *from below*". (*HA*, 74-75, emphasis ours). One cannot miss the similarity between this formulation and proddings by revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemberge to Lenin to ward off totalitarianism by adopting democratic practices. His holistic approach implied that by the comprehensive scope of planning he meant its coverage of economic, social, political and cultural issues and not just any specific narrow class of issues, as comes out with some force in his subsequent elaboration of the "immediate programme of planning".

The rationale for going in for comprehensive planning preceded the formulation regarding the imperative of setting up Planning Commission. He maintained, "I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease, and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines". (*HA*, 75) It is for these momentous tasks that a planning commission was to be set up by the free, national, non-totalitarian democratic government. While advocating a socialistic response to our principal problems and opting for comprehensive planning, Netaji had a clear perception that, as he put it, "socialism is not an immediate problem for us". (*HA*, 84). Thus, according to Netaji, socialistic reconstruction for eradicating poverty, illiteracy, disease and for scientific organisation and growth of production and distribution we required institutional arrangements for planning by the national government.

In addition to the choice of planning as an instrument of social reconstruction, Netaji elaborated some broad principles of its methodology or components. According to him, the plan will have two parts: "an immediate programme and a long-period programme." That Netaji looked beyond the economic question encompassing the entire social structure and processes is visible in the elements of the immediate

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

objectives which were as follows: "One to prepare the country for self-sacrifice; secondly, to unify India; and thirdly, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy" (*HA*, 75). This comprehensive agenda of planning concerning social, political, economic reforms was premised on the reconcilability of the unity of India, implying "a strong central government" with an effective and meaningful dose of decentralisation allowing both the minority communities and the provinces "a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs"(*HA*, 75).The experience of planning everywhere underlines the principles that since social life is an integral whole, concentration exclusively on certain aspects with the hope that their criticality and wider reach would be able to set the tone for the rest of the social situation can be a fatal flaw for the plans. Plans, to him, it appears, were a means for nation building and not just for increasing the production and GNP of the nation. The emphasis was on "scientific production and distribution" and not just the increase in the size of the national cake.

Here it may be pertinent to note that Netaji unfolded the vision and concrete attitudes and policies required for reconciling national unity with local level or grassroot decentralisation and autonomy. He stressed the need for a *lingua franca* and considered that "the distinction between Hindi and Urdu is an artificial one". (*HA*, 85). He reiterated the INC resolve to fully protect the religious and personal susceptibilities of the minorities. His prophetic words bear reiteration: "A minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority." (*HA*, 76).

The role of planning for "national reconstruction" in injecting positive elements for the unity of the nation was also vindicated by Netaji. He stressed the need for "emphasing our common interests, political and economic" in order to "cut across communal division and dissensions." Linking up planning and national unity he pointed out the significance of standing for "the political and economic rights of the *Indian people as a whole*" (*HA* 73, emphasis ours). To, him the political agenda was not just to provide pre-conditions, for reconstruction planning but was closely interwoven with the nitty-gritty of planning. Given Indian condition, he could forsee the growing conflict between planning for strengthening the *status quo* and planning for a forgoing redistributive transformation. The manner in which the *status quo* based theory of trickle-down was made the fulcrum of Indian planning in the post-independence era was certainly not in keeping with the perspective given shape by Netaji Subhas. His classic statement on this question may well be quoted in full: "Moreover, if after the capture of political power national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines as I have no doubt it will—it is the *'have-not' who will*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

benefit at the expense of the `haves` and the Indian masses have to be classified among the *`have-nots'*. (*HA*, 73) In the same paragraph, Netaji recognised the existence of so-called "depressed classes" who are made to suffer" religious and social disabilities."

What one can see with considerable clarity is that the all-important priority naturally given to national emancipation did not stop Netaji from recognising the divisions, fissures and inequities in our midst, be they based on minority character of religious groups, *varna* system, economic factors or religious and social disabilities. Therefore, his plea was for "A policy of live and let live in matters religious' and an understanding in matters economic and political" (*HA*, 72). It is in the perspective of such a recognition of social reality that one has to see how a policy of redistribution—of benefitting the have-nots at the expense of the haves made immense sense and held an irresistible appeal to him . It is in this context that we have to judge the rationale, efficacy, limitation and heavy national and human costs of concentrating our energies on absolute-poverty along with a combination of trickle-down and pull up strategies in the post-independence era. Let us pause and wonder: are our limitations in nation building to this day related in some serious sense to our inability to benefit the have-nots at the expense of the haves? Can the policy "betting on the strong" ever build a humane and prosperous society as distinct from a few islands of prosperity in the midst of a vast sea of penury and deprivation?

Coming to the *programmatic content of planning* for reconstruction, Netaji gave voice to the needs and interests of the masses. After pointing out the need "to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist", he went into the specific plan programmes. He maintained that, "regarding reconstruction, our *principal problem* will be how to eradicate poverty from our country. That will require radical reform of our land system, including the abolition of landlordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of cooperative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from land" (*HA*, 76). It is remarkable that in addition to advocating cooperativised, small farm economy in a post-land reforms and delandlordised era, Netaji made a clear distinction between productivity of land and productivity of labour and opted for the former for the present as land was and continues to be our main limiting factor.

Our recapitulation of the programmatic context of netaji's thinking about planning for national reconstruction must take note of the manner in which Netaji accepted the logic of planning—something quite natural

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

for the person who constituted the first National Planning Committee and pleaded for the constitution of the Planning Commission. He prefaced most of his concrete policy suggestion by propositions like "A Planning Commission will have to consider carefully and decide", "the state on the advice on the Planning Commission, will have to", etc. (HA, 77) The Planning Commission in his concept of things was to be an expert advisory body, representing various interests, not only organised ones, but, as he suggested, also the representation of Khadi and Village industries. These are invaluable elements of democratic planning.

Netaji's approach to national reconstruction was multipronged. Building on the foundation of revitalised agriculture, he was an advocate of industrialisation, and was not satisfied merely with industrial recovery following the downturn caused under the impact of the Great Depression. He told Meghnath Saha in 1938 that, "The problem we have to face is not industrial recovery, however, but industrialisation. India is still in the pre-industrial stage of evolution". (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 71) He, therefore, wanted India to "pass through the throes of an industrial revolution" (Idem). These issues were clarified by Netaji while inaugurating the first meeting of the National Planning Committee. He highlighted the role of modern industries and catching-up industrialisation which inevitably involved large scale industries, maintaining that such choice is limited to "whether this revolution, *i.e.*, industrial revolution will be a comparatively gradual one as in Great Britain, or a forced march as in Soviet Russia. I am afraid that it has to be forced march in this country" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 72). As if to clinch the issue he opined that, "economic planning for Indian should mean largely planning for the industrialisation of India" (*Idem*). One can see how these ideas coincided with those of pioneers like Rosenstein-Rodan, Colin Clark, etc., and drew heavily on the experience of the first industrial revolution and involved emulating the emulators.

Insofar as Netaji suggested "the growth and development of the mother industries, *viz.*, power supply, metal production, machine and tools, manufacture of essential chemicals, transport and communication industries, etc. (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 83). One can see how Netaji could foresee the essentials of the Mahalanobis model nearly decades prior to its formal appearance. One can see how this approach paid rich dividends in building up the sinews of India's self-reliance. The Nehru-Mahalanobis model, thus, may better be termed *Subhas-Nehru-Mahalanobis model.*

However, in the context of the colonial domination over India, which was sought to be consolidated by the federal part of the Government of India Act 1935, the question of industrialisation was closely intertwined

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

with the controversy about the role of foreign capital in general and British capital in particular.

Given the *Swadeshi* aspirations, planning for national reconstruction had to lay down the essentials of the nationalist response boldly and with clarity. Netaji realised the close interconnection between *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi*. He asserted, "It is, of course, preposterous to permit foreigners to compete in this country with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine *Swaraj* if India is to be denied the power to devise and adopt a *national economic policy*, including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between nationals and non-nationals" (*HA*, 80-81, emphasis ours). What had been for long one of the cornerstones of India's quest for self-reliant development found a crystal clear and eloquent expression at the hands of Netaji as "the power to device and adopt a national economic policy" rather than as some empty and misleading indices like zero net aid, proportion of imports paid for by our exports, etc. Need one recall the contemporary significance of this view when nearly all the political formations in India of 1990s are bending over backwards to implement and move to "broader, deepen and activate" the IMF-World Bank authored, sponsored and imposed programme of structural adjustment policies? Netaji quoted Mahatma Gandhi's famous 1931 article "The Giant and the Dwarf", which maintained that "*to talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European, is to perpetuate Indian harlotage.*" Netaji added in good measure that "To justify such limitations on our soverienty on the ground of "reciprocity" and partnership is to add insult to injury". (*HA*, 81). He asserted that there cannot be any sacrifice of this right of future Indian Parliament (*Idem*). In this context, Subhas Bose advocated "an active foreign trade policy for India" and warned that "before we permit non-Indian vested interests to be established in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, we should be careful as to its political repercussions and economic consequences". (*HA*, 82). In one word, intense and uncompromising economic nationalism rooted in the interests of common masses without degenerating into an autarchic closed door policy (which captures the essence of what was articulated by the dependency theorists later on during 1960s and 70s) was the bedrock of Netaji's approach towards national reconstruction through social-economic planning. There is nothing in this view which can be treated as parochial. Netaji was keenly aware of what passes off today as globalisation. He said "What happens in one remote corner of the present World has far-reaching repercussions all over the globe". (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 62).

As mentioned earlier, in Netaji's scheme of industrialisation, an important plank was gradual socialisation (which ought not be equated with nationalisation as the two admittedly have substantively different

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

connotation) of the entire agriculture and industrial production. This does not appear to be a recipe for statisation of the economy or invocation of totalitarianism), as would be evident from Netaji's support for radical land reforms, abolition of landlordism, introduction of cooperation in agriculture and support for cottage industries. On the other hand, he was deeply aware of the ills of industrialisation which he attributed to concentration and centralisation. In his own words, "the evils resulting from Industrial capitalism are due largely to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few and to abnormally large dividends which are gathered either at the cost of sweated labour or at the cost of the exploited consumers in colonial and semi-colonial countries". (*Labour in Jamshedpur,*328) In this article he gave a graphic account of the sharp practices at TISCO to highlight similar ills of industrial capitalism in India. Being endowed with a plan-oriented disposition, Netaji could not escape the question of resource mobilisation. He maintained that "extra capital will have to be procured through internal or external loans or through inflation" (*HA*, 77).

Industrialisation was viewed by Netaji in the context of "national reconstruction and social planning" and quite a few of his ideas were presented to the industries ministers of the seven Congress Provinces, with a view "to explore the possibilities of an All-India Industrial Plan" in view of the fact that "the problems of poverty and unemployment (are) looming so large in our national life today". He clearly recognised the need for structural changes as "a large proportion of village population have to be diverted to industrial occupations". He was confident that "a scheme of planned industrialisation can take us on the path of all-round prosperity". He cited the case of Russia, "irrespective of the political theories on which this state is based" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 81). In any case, his penchant for learning from the experience of the others did not make him oblivious of the special Indian realities, like, *e.g.*, the prevalence of small, artisanal and rural decentralised industries. Therefore, he suggested, what later on came to be known as Mao's policy of walking on two legs. Stressing the complementarity of the big and small industries, (he cited the example of Japanese subcontracting to drive home this point (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 89) particularly the rural cottage industries, Netaji came out with an explicit formation that "industrialisation does not therefore mean that we turn our back on cottage industries" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 82). It is clear that elemental market forces do not take cognisance of such complementarities with a view to give them a symbiotic thrust; planning, has to be involved for the purpose of strengthing both the backward and forward linkages between different subsectors of the industrial sector. In this process, Netaji

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

must have been aware of the negative direct consequences and externalities spawned by the Industrial Revolution and its emulators across the globe. This understanding must have been bolstered up by the sharp warning notes sounded by Mahatma Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj* concerning the evil consequences unleashed by modern industrialisation. Hence, Netaji's plea that while there is no escape from industrialisation —a "necessary evil"—in order "to improve the miserable lot of our peasantry and to raise the general standard of living" (*op.cit.*, 79), it was combined with a resolve that "we can only try out best to mitigate the ills that have attended its advert in other countries" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 79 and 82). One can again see that no such reconciliation has come about automatically through the interplay of *laisseze faire* forces historically, nor can such expectations be entertained on the basis of a *priori* theorising. What one needs is planning, which consciously devices approaches for dealing with this question.

It must be recognised that Netaji was aware that "without waiting for the advent of *Purna Swaraj,* we are moving in the direction of economic planning" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 72) and stressed the need for issues like technical education, research, national unity and a common national language. Netaji made it explicit that "the rising generations are now thinking in terms of socialism as the basis of national reconstruction and socialism presupposes industrialisation" (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 75).

However, to this unorthodox leader, socialism was no licence for over-centralisation and totalitarianism, as we have attempted to bring out above. Recognising deep ideological divisions with the Congress between the Left and the Right, Netaji made an attempt to clear the mist when he clarified: "Socialism is a word which is sometimes a bogey to many, but I believe, if we analyse and try to understand what socialism really stands for, and what particularly Municipal socialism stand for, we shall have no reason to fight shy of it". (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 65). The commitment to reason, to freedom from being tied to the apron-strings of vested interests and a burning desire to ameliorate the miserable condition of his countrymen combined in good measure to generate a systematic and fairly comprehensive body of thinking about the future of free India. This involved the activisation of people's power and grassroot level democracy. Netaji was able to see that "the real school of democracy is local government", (*Pioneer of Indian Planning*, 67) which by means of municipal socialism becomes "a collective effort for the service of the entire community" (*Ibid*, 66). One can see strong streaks of preference for decentralisation, deconcentration and democracy in his acceptance of a socialistic approach-elements which are signs of flexibility and lack of orthodoxy. Given the peculiarities of the country,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

he did visualise close correlation between *Purna Swaraj*, national reconstruction planning, industrialisation, and socialism without laying down any rigid sequence. The basic rationale for all those, of course, was the good of Indian masses.

IV

SUMMING UP

All in all, the picture which seems to emerge from our limited survey of some of the important writings, speeches and letters of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, is his pioneering role in giving planning context, meaning, direction and democratic credibility. In the colonial context such far-sighted views were remarkable for the leader of a mass movement in the sense that they responded so magnificently and incisively to the challenges faced by the Congress Ministries in Seven Provinces. Without an intellect having intense emphatic bonds with one's countrymen and optimistic faith springing from struggling for the overthrow of the alien rule, such comprehensive ideas of lasting value could not possibly have emerged. Only an organic intellectual giving voice to the voiceless could cogitate and produce such a consistent framework for facilitating independent India's adoption of national development planning—an exercise which presupposes planning of the planning function. It is in this sense that one may maintain that Netaji's ideas and their powerful advocacy holds value far beyond the immediate milieu by way of a kind of road map for proceeding on the journey for planned national, social reconstruction.

Comprehensive social, national planning for social reconstruction and industrialisation as a systematic, organised way of responding to the onerous challenges faced by the national government immediately after the departure of the British clearly had its roots in Netaji's ideas. He went in a broad, general way into a large number of issues concerning the agency, methodology and content of planning, and only rarely referred to it as economic planning. It was in this context that one has to understand the setting up of the National Planning Committee. This was indeed the beginning of the era of planning marked as it did the arrival of proto-planning. The social discourse of the time gave planning a pride of place. Both the major forces working for social transformation as also those for ensuring the extended reproduction of the prevalent system were veering round to the acceptance of the instrumental role of planning. Obviously, diversity of ideology, context and objectives would make the plans embody widely divergent content. In this era India saw many an attempt at planning displaying diversity of content. One may recall the industrialists' Bombay Plan, the Royists' People's Plan, Sriman Narayan's Gandhian Plan, etc. The interim government in the mid-forties

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

also began work on planning in India. It is apparent that Netaji's writings and campaigns gave both a big boost as well as people-centered thrust to these diverse endeavours. A logical extensions of all these stirring was the setting up of India's Planning Commission in 1951. One can treat it with ample reason as a major step marking the culmination of the ideas and institutions mooted by Netaji.

We will have to devote a lot of space in order to show the continual relevance to many of the seminal ideas of Netaji concerning planning for the reconstruction of India. That is not our agenda presently. But for those who are not swayed by the so-called intellectual fashions and catchy phrases originating in the West (which is still unfortunately treated as the intellectual mecca by many), Netaji's thinking and his method of thinking would help in making choice of the criteria for deciding on national social issues. For those who want to use their sociological imagination for generating creative, critical responses, Netaji's thinking would be beackon light of lasting value, relevance and source of inspiration.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bose, Subhas Chandra, *An Indian Pilgrim*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1985.

Planning Commission, Government of India, *Subhas Chandra Bose: Pioneer of Indian Planning*, New Delhi, 1997.

Bose, Subhas Chandra, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Government of India, 1969.

Dobey, M. *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Man and his Vision*, New Delhi; Ha-Anand, 1998.

Mukherji, I.N. "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Socialist Thought", *Mainstream*, January 24, 1998.

Myrdal, G. *Objectivity in Social Research*, London, Gerald Duckworth, 1969.

Gangal, S.C., "Netaji Subhas Bose: Patriot, Planner and Nation Builder", *Yojana*, April, 1996.

Kabra, Kamal Nayan, *Development Planning in India*, New Delhi, Sage, 1997.

Gangopadhyay, Partha, "India's Planned Departure from Development Planning: Some New Insights", *Asia-Pacific Development*, Vol. 4. No. 1, June, 1997.

Sachs, (ed.) *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge As Power*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 1997.

Bose, Subhas Chandra, "Labour in Jamshedpur: The Other Side of the Picture" *Modern Review*, 1936; reprinted in *Netaji's Collected Works*, pp. 327-37.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

DISCUSSANT'S COMMENTS

Jay Bhattacharjee

APART FROM the fact that my thoughts in today's seminar will be influenced by the emotional ties that our family had with Netaji, my reaction and my response are primarily based on Prof. Kamal Kabra's paper on the economic aspects of Netaji's thought processes and his philosophy.

Prof. Kabra has indeed made a perspective contribution. He had told me earlier that I should be ruthless with his paper. However, as it so happens, I find myself in a position where I agree with most of the things he says. So, I cannot be ruthless. But I will try to be objective.

The main point which Prof. Kabra has brought out in his analysis of Netaji's thought process and philosophy is that Netaji looked at planning as an adjunct or supplement to the price mechanism. This is something which is very important.

This country is passing through a transition stage and transition phase, where buzz-words like 'free market' are sought to be promoted by a wide range of people. In the last five or six years, the policy framework in this country has undergone a radical change. Although that is another major debate, which must be carried out separately, the impact of the Manmohan Singh-Chidambaram economic regime is there for all of us to see and observe. It has many plus and minus points, but if you look at all the documents, they all talk of replacement of planning by market economy.

Now what Netaji had talked about, and I think Kamal has rightly concentrated upon, is the notion that planning can be an adjunct and a supplement to the market economy. This is what is called "market socialism" in many places in the world. The term "market socialism" has been prevalent for the last 40 years in Scandinavia, where there has been extensive discussion on the role of market socialism in the history of economic development, to which point I will come later.

The countries that have consistently done well in economic development are the ones that have based their economic models on market socialism, whether it is Japan or a number of other countries. I think the Japanese economic model has been widely misinterpreted, if not misunderstood, in India. The Scandinavian countries,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Switzerland, France, and the UK with the original Beveridge Plan, and Canada, have built up sound economic and strong social fabrics. In India, we are presently talking about the replacement of planning by liberalisation. Now, liberalisation is a catchword which, unfortunately, neither the advisers of Dr. Manmohan Singh nor of Shri Chidambaram, have been able to define and delineate. This is one aspect which Prof. Kabra has brought out. I think we should do research and further work on this theme.

Another point which Prof. Kabra discusses very perceptually is the concept of the Subhas-Nehru-Mahalanobis Model. Prof. Kabra has talked about it at length, the way Netaji referred to mother industries, had influence on the late Prof. Mahalanobis and the fact that Pandit Nehru had encouraged him. I would have preferred it, instead of calling it Subhas-Nehru-Mahalanobis model, let us call it Subhas-Mahalanobis model. Be that as it may, the development of commanding heights, or mother industries, is something which is again very widely misinterpreted in the current debate. If India had not gone in for the public sector or development of basic industries in the 1950s, we would have been in a much weaker position today. I am not saying that public sector undertakings have been models of efficiency and there are no major problems with the public sector. However, some of the public sector enterprises are also prime examples of successful companies. If we take into account the *Nav Ratna* companies, they have done better than many of the private industrial houses, which just shows that the debate is not public sector versus private sector but on the old concept of good management. If you give the people the atmosphere and environment to perform, they will perform. Ultimately, it boils down to government, its ideology and implementation. Netaji was very clear about governance. We have all heard about the Calcutta Corporation experience of Netaji. Here was a person who practised what he preached. So, what Prof. Kabra and Dr. Lakshmi Sahgal had talked about, grass-roots performance is extremely important.

Even today, after the collapse of Communism and the so-called East European experience, there is a party in Europe, the Italian Communist Party, which still gets 35 per cent of the vote. Obviously, the reason for this is that the Italian Communist Party has done excellent municipal administration in Northern Italy and some parts of Southern Italy in the last 50 years. Therefore, they have captured the hearts of the people, not by armed revolution or other means. This is very important. Government performance and good management are something which Netaji concentrated upon. His role

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in the Calcutta Corporation or his performance as a military administrator have already been discussed and I do not need to reiterate them.

The other point which Prof. Kabra has brought out is the distinction between medium-term and long-term programmes. Here again, the debate gets blurred in this country. We try to think about planning as a uni-dimensional phenomenon. It is not. Planning has to have short-term and long-term features which Netaji really tried to analyse and introduce in practice.

The other concept is leadership from below, the combination of trickle-down and pull-up. We keep on talking about one or the other models. I do not think there is any inherent contradiction. We can have the trickle-down and the pull-up model. Americans would have preferred to talk about the trickle-down approach; they would have preferred us to go in for the Brazilian or Argentenian model. But the trickle-down rarely happens. The people at the top, the affluent and the privileged, never give up their privileges. So, the affluence never trickles down. On the other hand, you need the bottom-up approach for the strategic sectors. Therefore, Netaji talked about the combination approach.

Then we come to the very ticklish question of protection of Indian business interests. This does not imply protecting the inefficient, corrupt, private Indian enterprises. When we first came to Delhi in 1957, there were at least four industrial houses in this city, which were household names in the country. Out of those four, three are now bankrupt by any standard. That means, the management of those companies took the shareholders for a ride, took the banks and lending institutions for a ride, took the employees and workers for a ride, and defalcated the provident dues of the workers.

So, when we talk about the protection of Indian interests, the protection of Indian industry, I do not think Netaji would have meant *carte blanche* support to those total profligate characters, who have siphoned off investors' funds and public tax-payers' funds. Still, while I have my disagreements with Rahul Bajaj on certain points, the Bombay Club does have a point. Indian industry needs a little amount of strategic protection before it can compete with the global giants. I am saying this very deliberately, because the indiscriminate opening up of the Indian financial sector and the consequent results are there for all to see today. The Indian capital market is dominated by foreign institutional investors, thanks to Dr. Manmohan Singh, who gave them a concessional tax regime as opposed to the Indian domestic investors. In other words, you and I pay a higher rate of tax than the FIIs. We are one of the few countries in the world which discriminates against

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

its own investors. We will never be able to develop an equity cult; nor will be able to develop a healthy capital market, if the foreign operators—I use my words very carefully—continue to dominate the market. This is where we need protection.

It should be remembered that the Japanese opened up their capital market to foreign companies only in 1987, when the Japanese companies were the largest in the world. Netaji's ideas were very clear. We should not extend protection indiscriminately, which is what the Bombay Club probably wants.

The other thing is the concept of involvement of the public, the mass participation in politics. Netaji did not want the process of planning being hijacked by bureaucrats, politicians and businessmen. He referred to this possibility and this is what has happened. Planning in this country was hijacked by this group which gave planning a bad name. This is a classic strategy, you take something, pervert it, distort it and, therefore, give it a bad name and you replace it with something which is totally opposite. This is yet another area on which Netaji's thinking was very clear and on which further research needs to be done.

Finally, after reading and listening to the presentations by Prof. Kamal Kabra, Dr. Jaytilak Guha Roy and Capt. Lakshmi Sahgal, I would offer a thesis. This is that a true evaluation or assessment of Netaji will be very difficult, because there are too many vested interests in this country which would probably oppose it tooth and nail.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

8

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE, THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY AND THE AXIS POWERS, 1941-45

Bidyut Chakrabarty

'CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE alone is not enough to overthrow the British. As the British Government relies on the strength of bayonets, we, too should use bayonets in order to defeat them decisively. As the enemy stands before us with the drawn sword, we should fight him only with the aid of the sword'.

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

(Extracts from remarks at a Press Conference, held at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, on 19 June, 1943) in *Selected Speeches*, p. 176.

'Throughout my public career, I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she has lacked one thing, namely, an army of liberation'.

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

(Speech at a military review of the INA, July 5, 1943).

The above quotations reflect Subhas Bose's predilection for armed-struggle as the means to attain freedom. The period between 1941 and 1945 was the culmination of a tendency, Bose had displayed since adolescence. He, unlike other Congress leaders, rejected non-violence as a creed but regarded it as an expedient at the same time. His passion for methods other than non-violence was well demonstrated in his student life, both in Calcutta and Cambridge[1]. The formation of a para-military force with Bose as the commander-in-chief during the 1928 Congress session in Calcutta is indicative of the urge he felt of an organised volunteer corps. So, what came in the wake of the formation of the Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauz, showed convincingly Bose's passion for violence as a means to liberate India.

[1]India Office Records (hereafter IOR), London R/3/2/21 : A Report by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, February 2, 1941.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Similarly, the acceptance of the 'Axis Powers' as a dependable ally in his zeal to supplement Indian National Struggle from outside symbolised to what extent Bose advanced the opportunistic trend in politics. He, himself admitted that "do not be carried away by ideological considerations; do not bother about the internal politics of other countries which is no concern of ours. Believe me when I say that the enemies of British imperialism are our friends and allies"[2]. The avaliable evidence suggests that to Bose ideological considerations were not primary in his selection of ally in this respect; in fact, he would not have declined the offer of Soviet Russia, had she not restrained herself from helping India "on the plea that the Russo-Germany alliance of 1939 was about to break and negotiotions between the British Government and Russia were in progress"[3]. During his stay in Japan, he tried to cultivate the Soviet alternative in view of the Non-Aggression Pact with the Axis Powers[4]. But repeated refusal on the part of the Soviet Union may have brought Bose closer to the 'Axis Powers'.

What prompted Bose to try the Soviet alternative repeatedly: the attraction of the Bolshevik ideology or, military strength of the Soviet state? Answer to the question may not be complete in view of the ambiguities, discernible in Bose's writings and activities. It is true, as Bose's own writings suggest, that 'Bolshevism' as an ideology did not impress him much, but he was moved by the qualities of leadership that Lenin showed in the aftermath of the Socialist Revolution of 1917 to rescue Russia "from disaster and from a tragedy similar to that which overtook Spain"[5]. He also appreciated the fascist leader, Mussolini, because "he (Mussolini) knew his mind and was not afraid to act"[6]. Interestingly, Bose who appreciated Mussolini characterised Hitler "as a German version of the Fakir of Ipi, with whom it was impossible to talk reasonably on any matter even for a few minutes"[7]. Bose's pejorative remark seems to have been prompted by Hitler's decision not to concede the proposal for a joint guarantee from the Axis Powers regarding India's freedom after war[8]. Even during the meeting on May 27, 1942 he further reiterated his racist

---

[2]The Quit India Movement : Broadcast, in *Selected Speeches*, Government of India, Delhi, 1964, (hereafter *SS*), p. 143.

[3]J.N.Ghosh, *Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose*, Calcutta, 1946, p. 90.

[4]He was quite confident of the Soviet help for the Indian cause. See *Blood Bath*, Azad Hind Publication, p. 69.; M.Bose, *The Lost Hero : A Political Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, London, 1984, p. 238.

[5]The Ramgarh Address, 1940, in *Crossroads*, (hereafter *CR*), Calcutta, 1964, p. 292.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 292.

[7]Phil Johannes H. Voigt, *Relation between the Indian National Movement and Germany* 1870-1945, Calcutta, 1912, p.15.

[8]Alexander Werth, *Netaji Oration*, Calcutta, Netaji Research Bureau, 1978, p.36.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

views which he explained in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler was critical of non-violence as a method as it was 'grounded on wrong assumption's[9]. Following his logic, the Fascist leader denied Bose any military help[10] to strengthen the effort Bose undertook to supplement the freedom struggle at home.

According to Hitler what Bose was demanding might have been an effective instrument of political propaganda but given the strength of the 'Indian Legion' under the aegis of the Fascist government, it meant nothing[11]. Bose's visit to Germany was frustrating because not only was he disheartened by Fuehrer's indifference to the cause of India's freedom but he was not received as well in Berlin as heartily as he expected[12].

WHY DID SUBHAS JOIN THE AXIS POWERS?

Despite being critical of Hitler, Bose always admired 'authoritarian personality'. His appreciation for Kamak Ataturk as 'a shrewd strategist and an acute diplomat'[13] and for Stalin who according to Bose, held in his hands destinies of the European nations for the next few decades[14] is illustrative here. Although he foresaw the strength of personalities, his lack of understanding of the international situation ruined his future. His emphatic belief that the Axis Powers were going to win despite indications otherwise, perhaps paved significantly the way for his downfall[15].

So ideological considerations did not prompt Bose to find an 'ally' in the Axis camp; instead his firm belief in the inevitability of the downfall of the British empire[16] and the 'victory of the axis powers'[17] propelled Bose to the Axis fold. Now, in terms of concrete achievement

---

[9]Phil Johanes, H. Voigt, *op.cit.*, p.14.

[10]Hitler summarised Free India's task as four-fold : neutralisation of the British influence, acting as a barrier against Russian pressure, reaching an agreement with Japan about India's eastern border, and finally internal reorganisation of India to achieve unity which might however, he added in a less optimistic tone, take perhaps one or even two hundred years. See the Annexure I: conversation between Hitler and Bose, 27 May, 1941.

[11]*Ibid.*

[12]J.Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, Singapur, 1971, p.108.

[13]On Kemal Ataturk : A Tribute by Bose, *CR*, p.79.

[14]The German Defeat, broadcast, May 25, 1945, *SS*, p.250.

[15]Freedom Struggle Survived : Bose's address to an independence day meeting in Berlin, Jan. 26, 1943, *SS*. p.167.

[16]On Arrival in Japan - Bose's statement to the Press, 19 June, 1943 in *SS*, p.175.

[17]*Ibid.*, p.175; and To the German and Italian People, Bose's radio broadcast, June 23, 1943 in *SS*, p.177.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

what did Bose attain as a result of submerging his identity with the fascist bloc? Although he failed to convince Hitler to back the Free India Declaration, his propaganda mission from Berlin produced results: he was allowed to use broadcasting facilities in Berlin and accordingly the Azad Hind (free India) Radio was inaugurated in 1941[18]. A monthly journal *Azad Hind* was also instituted to serve the propaganda offensive. While these were being pursued, Bose had been trying to create an Indian Army equipped with modern arms at the aegis of the German Government. Although the recruitment to the Indian Legion started as early as September, 1941 Bose could not draw more than 3,000 soldiers, who were prisoners-of-war in Germany and North Africa[19]. The army was less Indian than its counter-part in the Far East because *(a)* the members of the Indian Legion had to take a formal cath of loyalty to Hitler and Bose simultaneously with the understanding that they would be put 'into action only where common Indo-German interests were at stake'[20], and *(b)* the training personnel were German too[21]. These were the basic limitations that the Indian Legion in Europe had since its inception. It is now plausible why Hitler was reluctant to back the Free-India Declaration as it would be of small practical sigficance from the point of view of Germany. Bose's insistence on such a declaration at that point may be seen as to what extent he was suffering from 'megalomania'.

Nevertheless, his presence in Germany was not futile because by his commitment to strengthen the national cause he convinced the Japanese, who had close eyes on Bose through her Embassy in Berlin[22] since October, 1941. Therefore, when Bose realised the lukewarm attitude of the Nazi leadership as well as the strategic importance of fighting in Asia, he looked to the Japanese for help. To the imperial Nippon Government this was a strategic move because by 1943, the INA that was created out of the prisoners of war in the Far East with Mohan Singh as the leader was undergoing a crisis of leadership after the arrest of its leader on the suspicion of being a British spy. The transfer of Bose from Europe to the Far East was decided with a view to 'infusing fresh life into the INA'[23].

---

[18]Alexander Werth, Netaji Oration, *op.cit.*, p.23.

[19]*Ibid.*, p.33.

[20]A Report on the organisation and training of the Free India Army in Europe 1941-42, by Walter Harbich, in S.K.Bose (ed.) *Netaji in Germany*, Calcutta, 1970, p.55.

[21]*Ibid.*, p.49.

[22]Sometime in October, 1941, Colonel Yamamotto Bin, military attache in Berlin got a telegram from Imperial Government Head Quarter (IGHQ) in Tokyo. Yamamotto was ordered 'to make a direct observation of a man named Bose and report', J.Lebra *Jungle Alliance*, *op.cit.*, p.110.

[23]IOR L/WS/1/1576 : Note of the Japanese Offensive against India, July 22, 1943.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

INA: BEFORE AND UNDER BOSE

Bose's arrival in east Asia in July 1943 galvanised the already dismantled INA. The erstwhile INA had been not only weak numerically but had also been handicapped by the suspicion of the common soldiers that Mohan Singh was incapable of handling the Japanese to the advantage of the Indian National Struggle. Apart from some modest psychological values, the Singh-led INA was militarily insignificant at least without a complementary rising in India, Nevertheless, the Japanese hoped to capitalise on the sincerity and commitment of the rank and file core of the INA by revitalising the organisation. This lay behind the replacement of Mohan Singh by Bose whom they had been watching since his escape to Berlin. The choice of Bose by the Japanese in this regard was strategically guided in the sense that to present the INA as a real obstruction to the allied war endeavours one needed someone who could unite the prisoners of war to a common cause, and given the Bose's record of public service he was found appropriately suitable for this purpose. The calculations proved worthwhile and not only the Non-Voluntary Group led by Shahnawaz, G.B.Dhillon and K.S.Shegal but the civilians too joined the INA offensive campaign in large numbers. This enormous increase (from 10000 to 43000) is illustrative of Bose's success in raising the levels of consciousness of the Indians in east Asia as well as his ability to put that consciousness into practice in the form of their participation in the INA militarily.

What Bose attained in 1943 had its root in the preceeding years. Rashbehari Bose, an exile in Japan, had been trying to unite various Indian Associations in the British and non-British territories championing the cause of freedom since 1936-37. The formation of the Congress Party in Bangkok in 1937[24] was an upshot of his efforts. Only in the Bangkok Conference of June 1942 were concrete steps taken and new organisation, the Indian Independence League (IIL) came into being[25]. The conference resolved to sponsor a movement for achieving the complete independence of India through the IIL. It was also resolved that 'in furtherance of this objective the INA should be raised from among the Indian soldiers (prisoners of war) and such civilians as might be recruited for that purpose'[26]. A 'Council of Action' under the presidency of Rash Behari Bose was also formed to speed up the formation of the INA. The Bangkok conference therefore achieved

---

[24]IOR/L/WS/1/1577 : Formation of the IIL.

[25]*Ibid.*,

[26]*Ibid.*; For the full text of the Bangkok resolution, see Hugh Toye, *Subhash Chandra Bose : The Springing Tiger*, London, 1959, pp. 189-200.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

what the earlier one in Tokyo in March, 1942 could not. In fact the Tokyo Conference failed because of the disagreement among the delegates over the acceptance of Rashbehari Bose who was seen as an imposition on the Indian Independence League by the Japanese.[27]

The Japanese Government partronised the conference and the anti-British tone of the resolutions was psychologically advantageous to their war efforts. The purpose of encouraging such activities was to wean Indians from their allegiance to the British. Had they been successful, this would have been, from the point of Japan, a positive contribition to the formation of Great Asia co-prosperity sphere[28]. The above calculations certainly drove the Japanese to enlist the support of the prisoners of war. Major Fujiwara a comparatively junior staff officer, an idealist who fervently believed in the Greater Asia co-prosperity sphere contacted Captain Mohan Singh and Captain Mohammad Akram Khan when they surrendered on 15 December, 1941[29]. After a prolonged discussion, Captain Mohan Singh agreed to join the Indian Independence Movement and to cooperate with the Japanese forces[30]. The selection of Mohan Singh as the GOC of the INA created a schism among the rank and file of the prisoners of war: *(a)* the volunteers, who trusted the Japanese and were prepared to join the INA and *(b)* non-volunteers who did not trust the Japanese and remained aloof to the whole INA buisness[31]. Shahnawaz Khan, one of the surrendered officer, and who belonged to the latter attributed the split to two reasons: *(i)* the selection of Captain Mohan Singh who was a junior officer, as the GOC, raised the question of supersession of some very senior and capable officers, and *(ii)* given the

---

[27]M.Sivaram ex-minister in the Provisional Government of Free India, describes Rashbehari Bose as follows : 'Can you imagine the impossible combination of Al Capone, Saint Aurobindo, Prince Konoye and your favourite uncle? That's Rashbehari Bose for you". Quoted in M.Huner, *Indian in the Axis Strategy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p.489.

[28]Tojo, the Japanese Premier spoke to the 79th Diet about the aims and objectives of the already established 'Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere'.

'The basic policy of establishing the Greater East Asian Co-proeperity sphere has its origin in great spirit which guided the foundation of our Empire, its aim being to enable each country and people in Greater East Asia to have its proper place and demonstrate its real character, thereby securing an order of coexistence and co-proeperity based on ethical principles with Japan serving as its nucleus'-Tojo.

Tojo on the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere in *Japan's Greater East Asia Coprosperity sphere in World War-II* (Compilation of documents) edited and introduced by J.C.Lebra, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975, p.79.

[29]IOR L/WS/2/45 : A brief chronological Account of the INA, Monograph 2 (Personalities of the First INA).

[30]Maj-General Shahnawaz Khan , *My Memories of INA and its Netaji Delhi*, Rajkamal Publication, 1946, p.15.

[31]*Ibid.*, p.26.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

limitations of Captain Mohan Singh however sincere he was to the cause of the Indian Independence, there was a suspicion that he would not be able to cope with the Japanese intrigue and therefore the INA would be exploited by the Japanese purely for their personal ends[32].

From the very beginning the INA failed to unite all the prisoners of war. Skeptical of the Japanese motive, the IIL central committee never considered wise to go by verbal assurance only; the committee insisted on a formal declaration supporting Indians armed assault on the British. The Japanese never took it seriously for a formal declaration entailed regular supply of arms of ammunition otherwise the declaration seemed pious. Moreover, the creation of *Hikari Kikan*, a department of liaison between the League and the Japanese government and military administration by the Japanese, confirmed the apprehension that the League was not independent of Japanese control. In fact, the *Kikan* interfered constantly in even day to day activities of the League which was strongly resented[33]. The suspicion that the Japanense had an ulterior motive was so emphatic that Mohan Singh felt that 'it was quite clear to us now that they wanted to conquer India through Indians and by extending help and also material aid to us they were simply helping themselves'[34]. The tension was aggravated *first* in the 'disagreement over the issue of sending the INA to the Burma front' and *secondly* as a result of arrest of Colonel N.S.Gill of the INA on suspicion of being a British spy. These two incidents caused resentment as these decisions were taken without consultation with the IIL[35]. The final blow to the already crippled INA was given on 20 December, just within six months of its formation when Mohan Singh was arrested[36]. As a result and 'a prior secret order of Mohan Singh to dissolve the INA as soon as his arrest'[37], the INA virtually collapsed.

The INA in its '*first phase*' did not make much headway in so far as the Indian Independence movement was concerned. Nonetheless the British military was scared considerably of its strength and admitted that the INA-campaign was undermining the loyalty and the morale of the

---

[32]*Maj-General Shahnawaz Khan,op.cit.*, pp.20-21.

[33]IOR L/WS/1/1579 : *Hindustan Times*, November 6, 1945 : *How INA was born.*

[34]Unpublished Manuscript of Mohan Singh, pp. 5-6. Quoted in J.Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, *op.cit.*, p.90.

[35]IOR L/WS/1/1579 : 'How INA was born'.

[36]Shahnawaz Khan, *op. cit.*, p.55.

[37]IOR *(i)* L/WS/2/46 : A brief chronological and factual Account of the INA, 1946; *(ii)* Even the Japanese commentators mentioned that there was 'a fraction that arose between the INA and the Japanese Army which eventually developed into the ouster and arrest of General Mohan Singh', Interview with Mr. Juich Nakamura, interpreter to the Foreign Affairs Deptt. of the Formasan Governor-General in Tatsuo Hayashida : *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyrdom*, Calcutta, Allied Publishers, 1970, p.155.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

British Indian Army[38]. Until it entered its *second phase*[39], after the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose in East Asia in July 1943, the INA caused alarm to the British authority, which believed that Bose's arrival in Asia greatly increased 'the tempo of subversive propaganda and appears to have galvanised the IIL into greater political activity'. Before his joining, the IIL was only publicised in connection with Japan. Bose clearly 'intends to raise the movement into a national compaign for freedom supported by all three Axis Powers'[40]. In all his interviews and speeches, Bose reiterated his belief in an Axis victory[41] in the imminent liberation of India with the Axis help,[42] and in the need for an armed revolt in India to coincide with invasion from the east[43]. In order to put forward his plans into practice, he proclaimed the formation of a provisional government in the Far East and he also tried to augment the strength of the INA[44]. As far as the first move was concerned, it was a master stroke in the game of international politics[45] because it enabled Bose to declare war on the enemies (24 October, 1943) and to claim an equal status for the government in the comity of the League of East Asiatic Nations.

Whatever Bose may have attained militarily by associating with the Japanese, he alienated Jawaharlal Nehru completely. Critical of Fascism, Nehru apprehended that if India won independence with the Japanese help, British imperialism would be replaced by the

---

[38]IOR L/WS/1/1576 : Subversive activities directed against the Indian Army : Note, General Staff Branch, New Delhi, 18 March, 1943.

'A double attack is being made on the morale and loyalty of the Indian troop : one directed from without India by the Japanese, assisted by the renegede Indians and the other directed from within by Congress and Congress-inspired organisations'.

[39]. These expressions are used to avoid the controversy over the characterisation of the INA in its first (June 1942-December, 1942) and the second stages (June 1943-August, 1945).

For instance, Shahnawaz Khan characterised the INA under Bose's command as the second-one, while Mohan Singh questioned the above on the ground that 'the same military personnel continued in the so-called first and the second INAs'. Mohan Singh : *Leaves from My Diary*, Lahore, 1946, p.17.

Since there was a continuity between the 'first' and 'second' in terms of personnel and ideology, it sounds reasonable to separate the former from the latter in terms of phases.

[40]IOR *(i)* L/WS/1/1576 : Note on the recent activities of Bose, 14 July, 1943; *(ii)* L/WS/2/45 : A brief chronological and factual account of the INA at its second phase, June 1943—August 1945.

[41]Bose's broadcast from Tokyo : *To the German and Italian People*, June 23, 1943, in *SS*, p.177.

[42]Ibid., p.177.

[43]Bose's remarks at a press conference on June 19, 1943, in *SS*, pp.190-92.

[44]S.C.Bose : Address to the IIL, July 4, 1943, in *SS*, pp.190-92.

[45]Shahnawaz Khan, *My Memories of the INA*, *op.cit.*, p.viii, 'The provisional government was recognised by nine friendly nations'.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Japanese. He also warned not to "forget our own struggle for freedom for slogans which may sound pleasant to the ear but have little reality behind them or vague promises which have been broken often"[46]—a slanting remark probably hinting at the Japanese promises which proved pious later. In 1942, he came out with categorical statements demanding resistance to Subhas Bose and the Indian troops he had led because the army was no more than 'a dummy force under Japanese control'[47].

The second part of the proclamation required Japanese approval and Tojo, the premier, refused to commit himself to the expansion plans and half-jokingly suggested that 'the disorderly crowd should be controlled'[48]. In view of the poor show of the INA under Mohan Singh, the characterisation 'disorderly crowd' is understandable; but with the passage of time, the INA or the 'second front in India's war of emancipation' as Bose preferred to call[49], became a force of considerable strength. The British record shows that 'the total number of persons enrolled in or involed in the INA activities was approximately 43,000 of which 20,000 were members of British India Army'[50]. The war files reveal that in early February 1944, the British officials were so convinced of the strength of the 'Army of Liberation, led by Bose that they urgently felt the necessity of a counter propaganda'[51]. That it was not merely a collection of JIFC (Japanese Inspired Fifth Columnists) as it was officially characterised[52] can be substantiated by the vigour and seriousness that the British government showed in order to counter the INA offensive. 'It concentrated on psychological warfare and from the beginning of 1944 it carried out intensive campaigns through weekly leaflets and news-sheets in Japanese, Burmese and Indian languages'[53].

However strong the INA appeared during the war, it is quite clear from the available evidence that the main source of strength of the

---

[46]Jawaharlal Nehru at a press conference in Delhi, *National Herald*, Delhi, October 5, 1938.

[47]Jawaharlal Nehru at a press conference in Delhi, *National Herald*, Delhi, April 13, 1942.

[48]M.Bose : *The Lost Hero*, London, *op.cit.*, p. 213.

[49]*Blood Bath* : Bose's broadcast, p.56.

[50]*(i)* IOR, L/WS/1/1577 : INA strength; *(ii)* IOR, Wavell Collection (TSS) 977/14; Strength of the INA—Draft Press Communique of 24 November, 1945.

[51]IOR L/WS/1/1576 : Telegram from Fiji to the Secretary of State, London, February 14, 1944.

[52]IOR L/WS/1/1576 : Telegram from Fiji to the Secretary of State London, February 29, 1944.

[53]*(i)* M.Bose : *The Lost Hero*, *op.cit.* p.236; *(ii)* The Government of India apprehended a revolt in Bengal : M. Bose, *The Lost Hero*, *op.cit.*, p.235.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

INA was derived from its association with the Axis Powers though Bose in his zeal to fight never agreed. He realised this in July, 1944 when the tide of the battle had turned and the Japanese retreated. Bose wanted INA to continue confronting the Allied forces until their aim was fulfilled. However, Japanese withdrawal stopped military help to the INA and therefore despite his zeal to carry on the battle, he reversed his order[54]. What Bose would have achieved even with full supply in otherwise unfavourable circumstances is debatable. This shows however that the INA was a subordinate wing to the Japanese and therefore its penetrating power and even survival required outside help. Not only was the INA weak viz-a-vis the British forces, it also failed to rouse the people to the extent of an internal revolt as Bose anticipated. Instead he was criticised strongly for his cooperation with the Axis Powers at home and even his party, Forward Bloc, his brain child, did not approve his association with the Japanese. Bose's statements after the 'Imphal defeat' in November 1944—'the INA had defeated the enemy in every battle and only the unexpected heavy rain had washed away the chances of certain success in Imphal'[55] or 'the final victory in this war would belong to Japan and Germany .... and that new phase of war was approaching in which the initiative would again lie in the hands of the Japanese'[56]—meant to sustain the morale of the INA personnel under adverse circumstances.

Bose's assessment of the strength of the INA and the prospect of the Japanese victory even after the war situation had tilted in favour of the Allied forces, may be explained in terms of the following possibilities : as a leader of an offensive campaign he did not want to undermine the morale of the INA soldiers and therefore even under most adverse situation he had to be optimistic in order to infuse new life into the INA. He may have been quite confident of a mass-upsurge as soon the INA arrived in India. This may be illustrative of his megalomania and hence he had lost touch with reality.

Whatever optimism he showed may be said to have served his propaganda purpose and therefore, he rather, deliberately resorted to that. One can argue that it was natural for Bose who aspired to achieve a goal with a small army to value propaganda activity more than the real military raid. But his faith in the victory of the Axis Powers or Japan being the saviour of Asia even after the fall of Rangoon in April

---

[54]Fujiwara spelt Bose's helplessness in detail. See Hugh Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

[55]Quoted in M.Bose, *The Lost Hero*, *op.cit.*, p. 234; Shahnawaz, *My Memories of the INA*, *op.cit.*, pp.128-129.

[56]*Azad Hind*, November 6, 1944 : Quoted in G.Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, *op.cit.*, p. 191.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

1945 certainly questioned the soundness of his strategic calculation. The extent to which Japan was sincere to the cause of Indian independence is debatable. However, Bose's own writings and speeches indicate that Bose was quite certain about it. He argued that the promise to give complete independence to Burma and Philipines in 1943[57] and the transfer of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1944 and putting them under an Indian Governor—were illustrative, he argued, of the extent to which the Japanese were sincere to the cause of Pan-Asianism[58]. Although Bose renamed the Islands, as *Shahid* (Martyr) and *Swaraj* (Independence) respectively, and appointed Lt. Colonel Loganadhan as the first chief commissioner, it had propaganda value only. In fact, the Japanese admiral who was the *defacto* ruler pointed out that in view of the strategic importance of those Islands, 'nothing of real value would be in Loganadhan's hand, at the most, some departments of civil administration'[59]. The interference was frequent and Loganadhan complained to Bose that the Japanese had made his 'whole existence redundant'[60]. Bose was helpless despite his earlier success in an official recognition of the INA as an equal partner.

In another substantial issue, the release of Mohan Singh who was serving sentence, Bose had to accept what the Japanese had decided. Why he agreed is still debatable. Mohan Singh recalled that inspite of Bose's promise to pursue the Japanese government to set him free, he made no attempt possibly because he was not sure whether Mohan Singh would support him when Mohan Singh had declared his overriding loyalty to Nehru[61]. Major Fujiwara, the architect of the INA in its first phase, reminiscenced that 'Bose did not dare to have General Mohan Singh released for fear of its possible adverse effects on the ties between the INA and the provisional government of free India on the one hand and the Japanese Army, particularly, *Hikari Kikan* on the other'[62]. Even had Bose pressed hard the question of Mohan Singh's release, it is doubtful whether he succeeded since Mohan Singh was captured on espionage charges. Insistence on Mohan Singh's release would therefore create unnecessary tension between the INA and the Japanese which Bose strove to avoid for obvious reasons. Moreover, Bose may not have pursued the

---

[57]Time for Armed Struggle : Bose's Address to the IIL, July 4, 1943, in *SS*, p.191.

[58]Bose had reiterated his faith on Pan-Asianism several times. See *(i) SS*, p. 191; *(ii) Blood Bath*, p. 30.

[59]M.Bose, *The Lost Hero*, *op.cit.*, p.220.

[60]*Ibid.*, p.221.

[61]IOR, L/WS/1/1576. Mohan Singh's handwritten note, *Soldiers Contribution to India's Independence.*

[62]Iwaichi Fujiwara : *Memories of Subhas Chandra Bose*; Tatsuo Hayashide : *Netaji Subash Chandra Bose: His Great Struggle and Martyadom*, Calcutta, 1970, pp.157-58.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

matter seriously because he knew well that the reinstatement of Singh would alienate the high ranking Indian Officers of the British-Indian Army who were not in the INA in its first phase because of the imposition of a Junior Officer, as 'General' Singh was, on them.

The above discussion draws out perhaps two contrasting aspects of Bose's political carrer : *(a)* Bose in his ambition to be the 'bride' not the 'bride's' maid might be sceptical of Mohan Singh's attitude in future, especially when the latter owed his loyalty to Nehru. This might have led Bose who was then not merely a commander of an army, but the 'Asiatic Version of Fuherer' or Netaji, as he preferred to call himself[63] to calculate that Mohan Singh's release would have been worth-avoiding, *(b)* That he did not press hard might be illustrative of how he was strategically guided or how Bose and his INA were subservient to the Japanese in real terms despite his sucess in manipulating some decisions in his favour. In fact, Bose was not sure entirely about the sincerity of the British of the East' as he characterized the Japanese in the early 1930s. He believed that in helping the INA to drive the British out of India, the Japanese were doing no special favour, on the contrary, the strategic importance of India from the point of view of the Japanese empire in East Asia was the prime consideration influencing their decision'[64]. The insincerity of the Japanese became apparent with the gradual deteriorations of the Japanese position in the war [65]. Bose had to intervene all the time in order to protect his men from the possible maltreatment that might be inflicted on them. When the entire Japanese regiment along with the INA retrenched from Rangoon in April-May, 1945, Bose's presence then, for instance, prevented the Japanese from discriminating against them.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The INA experiment was a failure and Subhas Chandra Bose by joining the vanquished Axis Powers became a villian of history. Whatever the assessment in nationalist historigraphy, his involvement with the Fascist powers identified him as one who, by his ideological tilt in favour of Fascism, neglected the cause of India's freedom. Our discussion has shown that notwithstanding Bose's genuine commitement to national liberation movement in India, exclusive reliance on the Japanese deprived

---

[63]A. Hasan told M.Sivaram, the journalist that Bose would like Indians there to address Subhas as Netaji. 'The role of India's Fuhurer is just what Subhash Chandra Bose will and fill' in Sivaram : *The Road to Delhi*, Japan, 1967, p.123 and pp. 123-4.

[64]Shahnawaz Khan, *My Memories of the INA*, *op.cit.*, p.267.

[65]*Ibid.*, p.208.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

him of freedom of action; he became, as it were, a pawn in the Japanese hands. Because of INA's inherent limitaions, it was neither possible nor practical to do away with the Japanese. So, Bose seems to have been caught in a peculiar situation where he probably saw the problems and their remedies but failed to execute in the adverse circumstances. He lacked perhaps the skill or the opportunity to choose the right partner at the right moment.

Subhas Bose, it seems, was a born loser. During his career as a Congressman between 1921 and 1941, he rose to prominence rapidly by defeating the Gandhi-nominated candidate for the Congress presidency in 1939; he lost his popularity equally rapidly and failed even to win the leftists within the Congress over to him despite his crusade against the right wing Congress. It indicates, *inter alia* Bose's failure to build up a constituency of his own. He drew support, for what he stood for; his failure to sustain the support demonstrated that he had neither the charisma of Gandhi or Nehru, nor was he able to evolve an ideology to maintain his constituency. Machiavellian in his conviction, Bose failed completely to grasp the dynamics of Indian politics in which religion, caste and loyalties based on primordial ties played decisive roles.

Both on the national and international scenes, Bose's attempt to attain the goal he was striving for, was, therefore, abortive. Notwithstanding his sincerity to the cause, he lost to his adversaries because of his lack of underwtanding of *real politik*. By trying out several alteratives Bose, however, expressed his dilemma in accepting non-violence as a means to attain national independence. Thus the revitalisation of the INA in order to supplement the independence struggle in India seems most logical. Despite its limitations as an army, the INA by launching an attack on the British outside India infused fresh life into those opposing Gandhi and 'non-violence'. So, even though he fought from the wrong side of the fence, Bose's patriotism, sincerity and devotion to the cause of India's freedom made him a class by himself.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Annexure I

CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND ADOLF HITLER ON 27 MAY, 1942 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER RIBBENTROP, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, KEPPLER AND WALTER HEWEL. (MINUTES PREPARED BY HITLER'S CHIEF INTREPRETOR P.O.SCHMIDT ON 30 MAY, 1942).

Bose greeted the Fuhrer first of all as an old revolutionary and thanked him for the honour bestowed upon him by this meeting. The day would always be an historical date in his life. He thanked the Fuhrer for the hospitality and courtesy, which the German government had extended to him since his arrival more than a year ago, and for the help which he had received in working for the liberation of his country and in the setting up of an Indian legion. When he had left India in the January of the preceding year, his colleagues had been anxious about his personal fate and about his opportunities to attend to matters relating to India. Bose, however, through instinct and dedication/calling had been prevailed upon to take this step and, in retrospect, he could be certain that he acted in the best interests of his country. The aid from the tripartite power was essential for India, if India's own struggle for freedom was to be fought for. If India has done its duty in this battle, then it needs the sympathetic support of the rest of the world.

The point has now come to begin to cooperate militarily with the Japanese armed forces. India, however, placed great value on the creation of the closest links with Germany and Italy and the securing of the sympathy and aid of these countries, for it did not want to orient itself to Japan alone.

Bose travelled to East Asia then to talk and was motivated by the desire to move to a position which lay, if possible, in close proximity to India, from which to lead the Indian revolution. Of course, during his absence from Germany, the propaganda by the representatives he left behind would be continued in the former sense.

Bose concluded with a request to the Fuhrer, as an old and experienced revolutionary, for a few words of advice. Although India was situated a long way from Germany, and relations were very different from those in Europe, there were surely some basic rules, in accordance with which all revolutionaries must proceed.

India was constantly misrepresented and portrayed in an unfavourable light by English propaganda. The India which Bose represented was not the old philosophical India but a new modern and active India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The Fuhrer, in his reply, gave a brief outline of the situation. Germany and India had the same implacable opponents, in the first place, England, which had dominated India and also, Europe through its influence on its internal disintegration. It was England's wish to expand even further. Clearly, this danger could only be removed through England's military defeat, which would definitively remove the opportunity to extend such influence any further.

Apart from the British, the Bolsheviks and the Americans were common enemies—America and Russia between them had no honourable goals. America wanted to accede to England's heritage and Russia, on the other hand, was hoping to be the heir to both of them. For Germany and India, who were the object of that inheritance, it was irrelevant whether America wrangled its way into the English legacy or whether the Russians ultimately swindled/cheated both Anglo-Saxon countries. In India, the Russian threat could not be ignored and certain pro-Bolshevik ideas of Pandit Nehru with respect to the Russians seemed to him (the Fuhrer) extremely questionable.

The distance between Germany and India was enormous. True, the opponents of both countries were the same, but the battles against them would be fought on battle grounds which were very distant from one another. Inspite of this distance, India would clearly feel the effects of the German victory in Europe. Without the success of the Reich during the last two and a half years, it would have scarcely been possible for Japan to make such advances in East Asia, nor to mention enter the war. India and Germany were striking the same blows against the same enemy, regardless of where they meet that enemy.

India now had the unique opportunity to shake off the English yoke, without falling into the hands of the Russians. Russia would be completely smashed by Germany.

The battle in which Germany finds itself, is being waged by the Fuhrer, as a politician, in propaganda terms, essentially however, it is being waged in terms of the politics of strength by the Fuhrer as a soldier. In this way, he could not begin by making false prophecies. He had never predicted anything which had laid outside the field of his own capabilities. Moreover, in domestic policy, he had always avoided making forecasts about matters which lay beyond the means of his own power.

On these grounds, then he would not make any prophecy about Egypt. Rommel had been on the attack since the day before yesterday. Whether this operation would lead to the collapse of the English Front, he could not tell. In any case, Germany would do everything in its power. It could not give more than its blood and its labour. Should Rommel achieve only a limited victory, then a sweeping prediction

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

on the fate of Egypt would only cause harm. However, should Rommel succed in annihilating the enemy, then one could draw from that the end consequences. The Fuhrer would immediately call upon the Egyptians to throw off the English chains. He could make such an appeal in this case to the Egyptians with a clear conscience, for the support of Germany would be behind that appeal.

The Fuhrer had always been very cautions in calling for the violent rejection of foreign domination. He had not issued the first appeal of this kind to his own homeland, Austria, until the 12th March 1938, one day before the invasion. A politician who wishes to be taken seriously cannot act otherwise. He took the same view with regard to the Arab question. Had Germany already established itself south of the Caucasus with half a dozen tank divisions and a few motorised divisions at their disposal, so that help could be sent to the Egyptions and Arab insurgents, he would not hesitate in calling the Arabs to action. Now, however, with Germany still 1000 km away from Arabia, such a call would be irresponsible. The Fuhrer was not an Englishman. He did not want to send other peoples to destruction through calls to action. He was not striving for the annihilation of Egypt and the revolutionary Arabs, on the contrary, he wanted to help them to secure a real victory and not use them to ease their own burden as the English were trying to do. For its affair, Germany would shed its own blood.

India was an extremely long way from Germany. For them, there was unfortunately only the possibility of a land and a combination. The land attack would go over the Pesian Gulf, if the southern route were chosen, or over Afghanistan, if via the North. In any case, the only way was over Russia's corpse.

The world historical experience of the last 6 months was Japan's rapid advance by which their armies were practically pushing at India's borders. The Fuhrer did not know Japan's aims. He did not know whether it was more important to them (to liberate) first of all its territories from the menace of Chiang-kai-Shek and thereby cooperate, or whether they were primarily interested in Australia or India. The destruction of the power in East Asia could possibly lead to the collapse of British world power. Such a collapse would, of course, mean a great relief for Germany and would spare their blood. Germany, therefore, was working spiritedly to advance things in East Asia and hoped, for its part, to contribute to that possibility. It did so, while attacking the English at every opportunity. The Fuhrer referred, in this connection, to the U-boat battle, which also represented an indirect aid to the struggle in East Asia, as did the air-attacks on industrial

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

centres in Britain and battles in North Africa. Every English division destroyed there made Indian forces free, and the Indian forces which would be captured there could later be put into action in the struggle for the liberation of the Indian people.

For the moment, Germany could do no more. Had Germany, like Japan. already arrived at India's borders, were it perhaps would be in 1 to 2 years, then the Fuhrer would ask Bose to stay with him and march into India with German troops, to kindle the flames of revolution against the English.

Under the present circumstances, however, the Fuhrer could only advise Bose to approach the Japanese, in order to carry the revolutionary struggle from the border of India into the country itself. As an old revolutionary. he could only advise Bose to make use of a revolution inside India, where the enemy thrust was building up outside. In the long run, he did not believe that anything could be accomplished with the range of ideas of the anti-Fascist/anti-National socialist Nehru or with the passive opposition of Gandhi. English domination could only be broken if the Indian people rose up at the same time as an attack from outside. Such a rising could be better organised the nearer one was to the country itself. It would be best, then, for Bose to go where he was nearest to India and also where the strongest military advance could be achieved against the English inside India. Whether the Japanse actually wanted to carry out such an attack, the Fuhrer did not know. They had said nothing positive to Germany in that respect.

For the rest, he did not believe that a revolt without help from outside could bring freedom to the Indians. As an old revolutionary, he knew that with the development of modern weaponry, a relatively small number of troops with the right organisation, and the determination to use their weapons, a vast country could be kept in check. Only when military force came from outside, could the revolutionary forces inside the country get to work on the destruction of lines of communication, the blockade of supplies and troops transportation, thereby contributing to military collapse.

As things stood, it would be at least one or two years before Germany could have achieved a direct influence in India. Japan's influence, on the other hand, could be effective within months. Bose, then, should approach Japan so that from thereon, he would not only have an influence in his home country but he could also prevent Japan by means of appropriate advise from making psychological errors.

The Fuhrer, however, warned Bose against an air attack which might easily force him into an emergency landing inside the English power zone. Bose was too important a figure for his life to be gambled in such

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

an experiment, for him, a safer way had to be sought. A Japanese submarine had just arrived in Europe and could, if it was soon to return, take Bose on board. Otherwise, the Fuhrer, could have a German submarine put at Bose's disposal, which would take him to Bangkok. Then with the help of the map, the Fuhrer explained the prospective route to the Cape of Good Hope and estimated the length of the trip at about six weeks. At this opportunity, he also explained to Bose how, through the setting up of a submarine barrier between Natel and West Africa as well as around Medagascar, the lines of communication from England and America to India and Russia could be cut off.

Bose went on with two more requests: through English propaganda, comments made by the Fuhrer in *Mein Kampf* and on another occasion had been very distorted and might be used as propaganda against Germany. He asked the Fuhrer, therefore, at some opportunity to say a few explanatory words on Germany's attitude towards India. This would provide the desired clarification for the Indian people. Further, Bose made a fresh request for moral and diplomatic support from Germany for India, so that they would not be dependent on Japan alone.

The Fuhrer, in his reply to this question, defined India's tasks in the following way : elimination of British influence, avoidance of Russian influence, efforts to come to some sort of agreement with Japan over the East Coast of India and finally, domestic organisation and reconstruction of India with the aims of attaining Indian unity. This was an arduous task which drawing on the analogy of the establishment of German unity could take 1 to 200 years.

To Bose's remark on the distorted description of his own comments, the Fuhrer explained that he had unfortunately verred towards certain tendencies according to which oppressed people should form a common front against their oppressors. He had regarded this, in the light of the 'unconciousness' of these people.

On the question of German support for India after the war, the Fuhrer remarked that he could only deal at this point with economic support. Bose should not forget that the power of a country is only as great as its sword.

To conclude, the Fuhrer expressed to Bose his best wishes for the sucess of his trip and of his plans.

(Translated from the original German text)

Note: I owe the original German document to late Abid Hasan who was Subhas Chandra Bose's private secretary during the INA phase. I am thankful to Ms Ruth Hobson of the London School of Economics for having translated the document into English.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Annexure II

FIRST GERMAN DRAFT OF FREE INDIA DECLARATION
19th May, 1941

The German and Italian governments believe that the time has come to declare that the right of the Indian people to India and to the determination of India's destiny is absolute and uncontestable. The unjust appropriation of this right by an alien people and an alien government has, to date, been unable to extinguish this right, nor will it in the future.

Germany and Italy hereby recognise the irrevocable right of the Indian people to complete and unlimited independence.

Germany and Italy are certain that the Indian people will be liberated from the political domination and economic exploitation of British imperalism and will therefore, as Master of its own destiny, be capable of an effective recontruction of its national life and thereby, at the same time, will contribute to the good of humanity.

The Indian people, after its liberation, will, of course, decide for itself on the type of government it requires. It will also have the task of shaping its national constitution whether through a system of given conventions or through its leader or some other way. It is only natural that Germany and Italy would like to see India as a united nation, self-sufficient in its work, the essentials of life and opportunities for advancement, regardless of religion, class or other grounds.

Germany and Italy offer sincere wishes to the Indians struggle for freedom and express their readyness to help India, as much as their power will allow, so that the goal of freedom can be achieved without delay. They anticipate the day when the Independent India has its own national representation.

(Translated from the original German text)

Note: I owe the original German document to late Abid Hasan who was Subhas Chandra Bose's private secretary during the INA phase. I an thankful to Ms Ruth Hobson of the Londan School of Economics for having translated the document into English.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

9

NETAJI'S IDEAS AND CONTEMPORARY INDIA: THEIR RELEVANCE REEXAMINED

Asok Mukhopadhyay

LIKE MANY other centenaries, the birth centenary of Subhas Chandra Bose, the legendary freedom-fighter of modern India, has also come and gone. During the year 1997 a number of public meetings and seminars, some official but mostly non-official, were held throughout India. Some old controversies about the role of Bose in India's struggle for freedom have received new attention of many scholars and political leaders, and there have been some attempts at a new assessment of his contributions. But till recently not much efforts have been made to examine the relevance of Bose's ideas for reconstruction of free India. Some scholars seem to be intellectually satisfied by noting his activities in India's freedom movement from 1921 to 1945. Bose's dynamism as a political leader is almost universally recognised and handsome tributes are also paid to his charismatic qualities as a popular leader, expecially between 1938 and 1940 in India and as a great revolutionary fighter against British imperialism between 1941 and 1945 outside India.

Some other scholars and a few political leaders in modern-day India, on the other hand, seem to be hesitant to recognise Bose's substantive contribution to the freedom struggle and they prefer to depict him merely as a brave yet immature freedom-fighter who had suffered from some ambivalence and vascillation in his attitude and policies towards the Congress establishment and its supreme leader Gandhiji. But the fact is that the second group of scholars themselves suffer from inherent ideological prejudices and partisan views of their own, which prevent them from making an open-minded and objective analysis of the enormous data about Bose made available in recent years. But what appears really regrettable is that there has hardly been any serious academic study of Bose's ideas, which quite naturally took shape always in dialectics with his activism in the throes of the freedom struggle.

Subhas Chandra Bose was a student of Philosophy (Honours) in his undergraduate days in Calcutta University and intensely studied History, Politics, Economics, and Law while preparing for the Indian Civil Service Examination in 1920 and his Tripos in Cambridge University.[1] He came

[1]Subhas Chandra Bose to Deshbandhu C.R. Das, February 16, 1921.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

out successfully with high distinction in the ICS examination in 1920 but refused to serve the interests of British imperialism in India. Since this turning point of his life, he ceaselessly thought over the political, economic and social problems of India and came out with his own policy-recommendations. He was no arm-chair academician and he did have little time to put down his ideas in black and white in a systematic manner. He was undoubtedly a revolutionary fighter, an activist par excellence, but a little research will show that he was full of ideas about how to overcome the nagging problems of India's backwardness and underdevelopment. Once his vision and ideas are seriously studied and systematically analysed, Bose would appear as a thinker in his own right. What is still more surprising, most of his ideas would appear still relevant for India at the close of the Twentieth Century.

MODERNIST OUTLOOK

Right at the present moment India's politics, after fifty years of independence, stands at the crossroads of traditionalism and obscurantism, on the one hand, and scientific modernity, on the other. There is at present a clear and distinct clash of attitudes on India's path of development. Since the late seventies a world-wide campaign has been conducted in favour of economic liberalisation and dependence on the market as the sole guide to production and distribution. Capitalism on a world-scale has achieved an apparent triumph in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. But currently the advanced capitalist countries suffer from a high level of recession and unemployment, and the economic weakness of the so-called 'Asian Tiger' countries have already come to light. International economic and financial conditions have deteriorated considerably in the late 1990s as recession has deepened in many East Asian countries, Japan and the United States. Inspite of her recent policy of economic liberalisation since 1991 India's growth rate is confined to 4.5 per cent which is lower than those of China and Pakistan. The State in India must take the leadership in indicating the priorities of development and identifying the possible and necessary areas of investment. Planning in a democratic way is indispensable for sustainable development and social justice. A populous country committed to democratic from of government as India is, it will be unwise for her to go the whole hog with the liberalisation policy of the capitalist countries.

Since his Haripura address as the Congress President (1938), Bose has been harping on the basic content of the meaning of "Independence" for the common man. India is unfortunately still burdened with a huge size of unemployed, illiterate and undernourished population. Bose could

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

realise that it would be impossible for a country like India to tackle successfully the problems of her massive socio-economic backwardness without the commitment of her government to play a key role in matters of social and economic planning and development. Dependence on the capitalist path of development will not help India to solve such basic problems of supplying adequate potable water to villages, removing illiteracy, arranging primary education for all up to the age of 14 years, basic health care for all, especially mothers and children, and providing for the minimum calories by two square meals a day, and ensuring minimum housing for the people. Tackling these problems with a reasonable degree of success would require substantive investments in social sector. Capitalism hardly feels encouraged to make such investments. Bose underlined the need for such social sector investments not only in his Congress presidential address in 1938 but also in his speech at the Tokyo Imperial University in November 1944.

With all his reverence for Mahatma Gandhi's political leadership, Bose categorically described Gandhi's philosophy of life as not modern. He was very clear that, notwithstanding some evils of modern industrialism, "we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so". Gandhi appeared to him " a complex personality" whose philosophy on life was obscure, hence not acceptable to him. Gandhi did not accept modern industrial civilisation and his general attitude was antagonistic to foreign influence on India's thought, art and culture. Bose took his stand on "modernism" to build up "a new and modern nation" on the basis of India's own culture and civilisation.[2] Bose preferred Tagore to Gandhi in regard to their basic attitudes towards national reconstruction of India. He underlined the need of national reconstruction "only with the aid of science and our scientists".[3]

PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Bose was the first Congress President who vigorously campaigned in favour of planning as a necessary technique of social change and reconstruction. In his Haripura presidential address in 1938 and in speeches throughout the year 1938-39 addressed to Congress ministers of the provinces, other political leaders, and intellectuals and scientists,

---

[2]Bose's Presidential address to the Haripura Congress, February 1938; Subhas Chandra Bose, 'The Fundsamental Problems of India', address to the students of Tokyo Imperial University, November 1944. See *Fundamental Questions of Indian Revolution*, Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1970/1987.

[3]Bose's answer to Professor Meghnad Saha on August 21, 1938: see *Subhas Chandra Bose: Pioneer of Indian Planning*, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1997, p.71.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Bose spoke in favour of planning. Before him, only Nehru has been on record to have referred to the necessity of planning in his presidential address but he did not pursue his point subsequently and preferred to remain loyal to Gandhiji's anti-planning views. Bose not only talked of the importance of national planning, he ensured that the "National Planning Committee" was inaugurated by him on 17 December 1938 and he appointed Nehru as its Chairman.[4]

Without minimising the importance of achieving agricultural improvement, Bose was strongly in favour of adopting a policy of vigorous industrialisation. He categorised industries into three groups, *viz.*: *(i)* basic heavy industries, which he called "mother industries", to be exclusively in the hands of the State, *(ii)* other medium-sized industries to be in hands of the private sector with government cooperation and help, and *(iii)* small-scale, cottage industries, having no conflict with large-scale industries, in the private and cooperative sectors.[5] He argued the case for a central planning organisation to collect necessary data and determine the direction of planned changes. He wanted such a body to be broad-based reflecting the options and aspirations of different interests in the economy.[6]

Bose's ideas of planned development vis-a-vis the role of the state and private sector in the democratic transformation of the Indian society deserves serious attention even now. Most importantly in the present context, Bose underlined the importance of a proper economic survey of each province, coordination between cottage industries and large-scale industries with a view to preventing overlapping and regional distribution of industries.[7] It is a matter of regret that these important aspects of planning have not received due attention even after fifty years of independence. In some other respects, however, of Bose's idea of national planning, there is now a small beginning. He laid emphasis on giving "a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs" to the units of the Indian state. The process of involving the state governments in a serious way of national planning and development has just started in 1996 with the establishment of the Inter State Council under Article 263 of the Constitution. The units below the State like

---

[4]See, Planning Commission, Government of India, *Subhas Chandra Bose: Pioneer of Indian Planning*, New Delhi, 1997; Sankari Prasad Basu, *Subhas Chandra O National Planning*, (in Bengali), Calcutta, Jayashree Prakashan, 1970/1981; Asok Mukhopadhyay, 'Subhas Chandra O Rastriya Yojana', *Ganashakti*, Calcutta, January 23, 1996.

[5]Bose's address to the Industry Ministers' Conference in Delhi, October 2, 1938, see Planning Commission's publication referred in Note 3 above.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]*Ibid.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

districts, towns and villages have also been brought within the process of planned development under the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts (1992). State autonomy, decentralisation, district planning and multi-level planning and so on are now talked about. The relevance of Bose's thought to these developments is obvious but it remains to be seen how sincerely these ideas are translated into action in near future. Genuine decentralisation is yet to be achieved.

SELF-RELIANT SOCIALISM

Throughout his political career Bose advocated for adopting the goal of establishing a socialist democratic republic in India. He is best known for his idea of giving "all powers to the Indian people" so that they "could be put on their legs at a very early date". He was keen to see India achieving socialism "in an Indian way." With unambiguous emphasis, Bose favoured the ides of establishing a socialist order in free India in harmony with India's socio-cultural tradition and values and her special economic needs. Lenin and Ataturk were his heroes, and he appreciated the sense of national discipline achieved by Italy and Germany in the early thirties. But his ultimate goal was to build an Indian synthesis of all good elements of human achievements in science, technology and culture. Even in the thick of war activities Netaji thought of making free India's reconstruction a self-reliant process. "We will, naturally, study experiments made in other countries", observed Netaji, "but, after all, we have to solve our problems in an Indian way and under Indian conditions. Therefore, the system that we shall ultimately set up will be an Indian system to suit the needs of the Indian people".[8] He was fully confident that Indians will be able to establish socialism in their own way. His idea of self-reliant socialism proved to be a seminal idea of later-day theory in international socialist movement that each country and each socialist/communist party should enjoy the right of autonomous decision-making in regard to strategy and tactics of organising socialist revolution and taking up the process of post-revolution social reconstruction.

What Netaji observed in 1944 was echoed in international communist movement in 1964 by Togliatti, the leader of the Italian Communist Party, and was finally accepted on principle by Brezhnev, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1976 at the Berlin Conference of the European Communist Parties. Bose firmly accepted Socialism but, by implication, he rejected the idea of one definite and compulsory

[8]Bose's Tokyo Speech in November 1944, see Note 2 above.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

model of socialism. He actually talked of "polycentrism", without using the word, in socialist movement. At the close of the 20th Century the right of every socialist/communist party to adopt its own suitable national model is universally recognised.

Netaji had the necessary intellectual courage and conviction to assimilate the elements of socialist and democratic thinking found as much in Marx and Lenin as in Swami Vivekananda and C.R. Das. In the context of the present-day world the model of wholesale socialisation of all means of production and distribution and of centralised commandeering planning has lost its relevance. Bose insisted on tackling economic questions from the point of view of the masses. Hence, according to him, a socialist party has to be nationally-oriented, because a socialist party under foreign influence would not succeed in enlisting the support of the masses. Bose proved prophetic and he remains quite on this point.

On the objectives of planning for development, Bose's thinking was remarkably much ahead of his time. In his Haripura address (1938) he referred to the first priority of restricting India's population. He was the first Congress President to have recommended population control but left the details of method to the experts. He was apprehensive that India (undivided at that time) with 380 million people would find it extremely difficult to raise the living standard of the people. He observed: "...where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty million during a single decade. If the population goes up by leaps and bounds ... our plans are likely to fall through".[9] One major defect of our post-independence policy on planning and development has been to neglect this very problem. Today, India alone (excluding Pakistan and Bangladesh from undivided India) has a population of 950 million, which is demographically projected to increase to 1500 million in the next half century (*i.e.*, by 2050 AD). By the second decade of the 21st Century Indian will have the unique distinction of being the most populous country in the world, leaving China far behind. This is a dangerous demographical trend about which Bose had warned his countrymen, and he still sounds relevant in contemporary India.

Bose had identified poverty and unemployment as India's most pressing problem, followed by the problem of illiteracy.[10] On these problems, his relevance to contemporary India can hardly be overemphasised. By the end of the 20th Century India will have the

[9]Address to the Haripura Congress, February 1938.
[10]See, Haripura address (1938) and Tokyo Speech (1944).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

highest number of illiterates in the world, notwithstanding her recent achievement of raising the literacy rate to 62 per cent. Side by side, modern India's poverty level and the size of unemployment, after eight Five Year Plans having been completed, remain phenomenal. Despite three decades of "socialistic" planning and about one decade of economic liberalisation, India has the largest number of unemployed in the world and about two-thirds of her teaming millions still live below the subsistence level.

NATIONALISM AND SECULARISM

The point that Bose was a genuine nationalist leader needs to be emphasised today in view of the pathetic absence of true nationalist commitment in a number of political party leaders of recent time. Bose was not only irreconciled with the idea of hobnobbing with pseudo-nationalist elements but he also deeply resented the socially parochial approach to politics indulged in by some of his contemporary politicians. Today politics of caste and communalism on religions grounds are too much with us and these evils have eaten deep into the vitals of nationalism in India. In his post-Tripuri days, Bose addressed hundreds of mass meetings to emphasise the point that social evils like casteism and communalism can be effectively contained and their effects on politics be limited only through continuous and uncompromising mass struggle against the British imperialism.[11] In the context of current state of politics in India these two menances have to be controlled and, following Bose's idea and leadership, people need to be involved in uncompromising struggle against capitalist exploitation.

Of all national leaders in the freedom struggle the ideal of secularism is seen to have been preached and practised best by Netaji. Bose personally was religious-minded and he is known to have a copy of *Srimadbhagvatgita*, a scared text of the Hindus, always with him. He used to visit the Ramakrishna Mission at Singapore completely alone and at dead of night to practise meditation, through which he claimed to have received renewed energy and vigour in his war-torn days in 1943-44. But when in office as the Head of the Azad Hind Government he maintained strictly secular attitude and followed secular policy. He never allowed religion to be mixed up with politics and administration. From his early days in politics upto his INA days he had Muslims

[11]See the archival materials of the Government of Bihar, *e.g.*, Bihar and Orissa, C.I. Department Special Branch Memo No. 8637 of 28.8.39, Memo No. 1267 of 26.1.40, and Memo No. 1976 of 10.2.40. Also see *Lokmat*, Calcutta, Netaji Birth Centenary No., Vol. 3,1997.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

among his close confidants. In his radio speeches from the war fronts in East Asia, Netaji repeatedly appealed to Gandhiji, the Congress leaders and ordinary Muslim brethren to reject the proposal of India's vivisection on the issue of religion, as he consistently refused to define Indian nationalism in terms of religion. His movement for removal of the infamous Holwell Monument in Calcutta in 1940 was a joint mass movement of Hindu and Muslim students. On reaching Rangoon as the Head of his provisional government of free India, the first thing he did was to visit the tomb of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor and one of the leaders of the Great Uprising of 1857. And, in the composition of his cabinet and functioning of the INA in every respect, he upheld the supreme principle of secularism, rejecting any consideration of religious communalism.[12]

Netaji Bose was against the partition of Indian on religious and communal basis. He was one of the few nationalist leaders who could clearly see through the "divide and rule" strategy of the British imperialism. From East Asia's battle fronts, Netaji repeatedly and passionately appealed to the Congress leaders not to fall a victim to the British strategy. The people of the trifurcated Indian subcontinent today bitterly realise the evils of partition. Now it may be impossible to demand reunification of the countries of the subcontinent but the demand for a sort of a Confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh would not be unreasonable at all. This will, in fact, be a way of realising Netaji's vision, although in an imperfect manner. Some decades-old nagging problems between India and Pakistan and between India and Bangladesh can be solved only by establishing a Confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, whose teeming millions cherish the memory of their common struggle against colonialism and imperialism. Netaji's own party, Forward Bloc resolved in 1991 to campaign for a confederation but the issue has still now failed to evoke positive response from the bigger political parties.[13]

INTERNATIONAL STATESMANSHIP

Netaji had all the qualities and visionary capabilities of a statesman. He was no ordinary politician thinking always about the next election only. He could clearly visualise in the 30s and 40s that the forces in the international political life would invariably lead to a new world order after

[12]Asok Mukhopadhyay,"Netaji Subhas Chandra: Symbol of Secularism" (in Bengali), *Samajbadi Bhavna*, January 1997.

[13]Asok Mukhopadhyay, 'Indian Subcontinent and the Role of Forward Bloc (in Bengali), *Lokmat*, 19 June 1992; Asok Mukhopadhyay, *For a Secure and Bright Future: Plea for a Confederation in the Indian Subcontinent* (forthcoming).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the World War II. He urged his countrymen to prepare themselves mentally for greater cooperation in international life. He advocated closer economic and cultural contacts between India and her Asian neighbours and also realistic diplomatic and trade relations between Indian and the countries of Europe, Africa and Latin America. In his glorious days as the Head of the Azad Hind Government, Netaji emerged as a great leader of Asia, who enjoyed confidence of the leaders of the popular mass movements in different countries in East and South-East Asia. His road to internationalism lay through nationalism. His sincere feelings of international cooperation and brotherhood led him to take the initiative for sending the Indian Medical Mission to China in 1938 to help the Chinese people fight against the Japanese imperialists. He was disgusted at the weakness of the League of Nations and wanted a strong United Nations type of organisation. He especially advocated for India's close diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with the developing countries of Asia and Africa. His internationalism was influenced by Tagore's idea of human unity and international corporation.[14]

Netaji repeatedly made his position clear that he was fighting the menance of colonialism and imperialism in any from and anywhere in the world. The perspective of his struggles was the whole world. Secondly, as a pragmatist statesman, he underlined the necessity of using the issues of international politics for achieving India's freedom from the British rule as well as for emancipation of the exploited mankind. This international policy perception should enlighten the mandarins of New Delhi's South Block. National interests can be protected and promoted only through international cooperation based on realistic assessment of the situation and not through woolly and sentimental rhetoric of unpracticable and wishful internationalism.

CONCLUSION

Whether one likes it or not, Subhas Chandra Bose rose to be the leader—"Netaji"—in senses more than one. His international stature as a revolutionary and uncompromising fighter against imperialism and colonialism has been recognised with high praise by the leaders of Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, South Africa, Cuba, and many other Third World countries. Thanks to GATT and WTO, World Bank and IMF and many other agencies of neo-capitalism and neo-imperialism, the independence and sovereignty of many developing countries including India have

[14]Asok Mukhopadhyay, "Subhas Chandra's Internationalism" (in Bengali), in *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume* (in Bengali), Government of West Bengal, 1997.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

recently come under threat. Netaji's image would serve as a source of unending inspiration to the anti-colonial, anti-imperial and anti-capitalist forces throughout the world. His socio-cultural and politico-economic ideas continue to have their relevance even in India of the 1990s. Following Wordsworth's invocation of Milton's spirit at a critical juncture of England's history, we today need to underline that 'Netaji, thou shouldst be living at this hour, India hath need of Thee'.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

A CHRONOLOGY

Yatish Mishra

January 23, 1897	Born in Cuttack of the then Bengal Presidency (now in Orissa). Son of Janakinath and Prabhabati Bose. He was the sixth son and ninth child of his parents. His father Janakinath Bose was a Government Pleader and a Public Prosecutor in Cuttack, and became a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1912. He received the title of Rai Bahadur which he gave up in 1930 as a protest against the repressive policy of the British Government. Netaji's mother, Prabhabati, belonged to the wealthy family of Duttas of north Calcutta's Hathkola.
1902	Admitted to a Missionary school at Cuttack, called the P.E. School; Studied there for six years.
January 1909	Shifted to Revenshaw Collegiate School at Cuttack where Beni Madhav Das was the Headmaster who made a deep impression on the mind of Subhas with his idealism and human values.
December 27, 1911	*Jana Gana Mana* was first sung by Rabindranath Tagore himself on the second day of the Indian National Congress session held in Calcutta.
January 1912	The song *Jana Gana Mana* was first published in *Tattavabodhini Patrika.*
March 1913	Passed the Matriculation Examination with credit, standing Second in the Calcutta University. Joined Presidency College in Calcutta.
1914	During summer vacation in College, left on a pilgrimage with a friend without informing anybody at home; visited such well-known places of pilgrimage as Rishikesh, Hardwar, Mathura, Brindavan, Varanasi and Gaya.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

1915	Passed the Intermediate Examination with credit.
1916	Expelled from Presidency College.
July 1917	Joined the Scottish Chruch College in Calcutta.
1919	Graduated with first class honours in Philosophy.
September 15, 1919	Sailed from Bomay for the United Kingdom.
First week of November 1919	Secured admission in Cambridge University.
July 1920	Sat for the Civil Service Open Competition in London.
April 22, 1921	Resigned from the Indian Civil Service after passing in the fourth rank in the merit.
1921	Graduated from Cambridge.
July 16,1921	Landed in Bombay from United Kingdom and met Mahatma Gandhi there soon after.
November 17, 1921	Prince of Wales to India was scheduled to land in Bombay. The Congress called for boycotting the visit of the Prince.
November 1921	The government imposed ban on Congress activities. The BPCC decided to start civil disobedience as a protest. It's President, Chittaranjan Das, made Subhas In-charge of the movement.
1922	Appointed as Principal of the newly started National College in Bengal and deputed by BPCC to organise flood relief work in North Bengal; C.R. Das also put Subhas In-charge of publicity for the BPCC and Head of the National Volunteer Corps of the Congress.
February 7, 1922	Sentenced to six months' imprisonment alongwith C.R. Das.
1922	After release from prison, became busy with flood relief work under Sir Praphulla Chandra Ray; also assumed the editorship of the *Banglar Katha*.
End of 1923	Became the General Secretary of BPCC.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

April 24, 1924	Appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Municipal Corporation by the Mayor of Calcutta, C.R. Das. Subhas took only half of the monthly salary.
October 25, 1924	Arrested under the Regulation III of 1818 for the alleged revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the government, and later on sent to Mandalay Jail in Burma.
June 16, 1925	Received the shocking news of the premature death of his political *Guru*, C.R. Das.
October 1925	Started hunger strike for six weeks with his comrade co-prisoners as a protest against government's denial of funds to Hindu prisoners for celebrating Durga Puja although the Christian prisoners were given funds for celebration of Christmas. He lost 40 lbs. in weight and his health was seriously affected by the hunger strike.
1926 (Winter)	Developed broncho-pneumonia, and as tuberculosis was also suspected, he was transferred to Rangoon for examination by a Medical Board.
May 16, 1927	Released from Mandalay Jail.
May 3, 1928	Subhas made one of the most eloquent pleas for social unity, including communal unity, at the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Conference in Poona.
December 1928	Became GOC of the Congress Volunteer Corps. Attacked Gandhian Philosophy in his speech as Chairman of the Reception Committee at the Youth Congress in Calcutta.
1928	Joined Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Srinivasa Iyengar and others to form the Indian Independence League.
1929	Compiled a book, *Boycott of British Goods*, with the help of Dr. Harish Chandra Sinha.
1930	Became the President of All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

August 22, 1930	Became the Mayor of Calcutta.
April - May, 1931	Toured many districts of Bengal and addressed several public meetings.
July 3-7, 1931	Delivered the Presidential Address to the Eleventh Conference of AITUC held in Calcutta and declared AITUC as public property in which all unions were welcomed to join.
1931	Resigned from the office of President of the BPCC as a protest against brutal police firing on the freedom fighters inside the Hijli Detention Camp.
1931-32	Elecetd as Treasurer of the AITUC.
January 1932	Gandhi returned empty handed from the Round Table Conference in London and called for the second civil disobedience movement. Subhas put forward an alternative programme to organise active non-cooperation of Indian people to enforce complete boycott of the Britishers.
1932	Banishment to Europe for treatment of tuberculosis of the lungs and intestines and established personal contact with Vithalbhai Patel in Vienna.
February 13, 1933	Enforced exile to Europe from Bombay.
July 1933	Arrived in Berlin from Warshaw. Subsequently, began writing his book *The Indian Struggle: 1920-34* in Vienna.
1934	Completed the book in Bad Gastein in Austria. Thereafter, arrived in Calcutta from Europe without the Government's permission and ordered home internment.
January 1935	The book, *The Indian Struggle,* was published by a London publisher.
April 24, 1935	Operated upon in Vienna for the removal of gall bladder.
1935	Attended the Conference of the Indian Central European Society at Vienna; addressed the Asiatic Students Conference in Rome inaugurated by Signore Mussolini.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

1936	Visited Ireland; arrived in Bombay and arrested on board the ship.
1937	Got unconditional release from prison and departed for Europe. Wrote an autobiographical sketch—*An Indian Pilgrim,* in Austria.
January 18, 1938	While in abroad, elected President of the 51st session of the Indian National Congress to be held at Haripura in Gujarat; met the Irish leader, Mr. de Valera, in Ireland.
January 29, 1938	Returned to India from abroad.
Febuary 19, 1938	The blueprint for free India outlined by Subhas in his presidential address at the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress.
May 1938	Convened in Bombay a conference of the Premiers of seven Congress Provinces.
September 1938	Began an open propaganda throughout India in order to prepare the Indian people for a national struggle.
December 17, 1938	National Planning Committee was inaugurated by Subhas; appointed Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Chairman of this committee.
March 1939	Presided over the 52nd session of the Indian National Congress at Tripuri in the Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh).
April 29, 1939	Resigned from Congress Presidency due to ideological differences with Gandhian leaders of the Congress High Command.
May 1939	Founded the Forward Bloc within the Congress.
June 22-23, 1939	First All-Inida conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay and the constitution and programme of the Bloc was adopted; Subsequently, expelled from the Congress by Babu Rajendra Prasad, the succeeding President.
July 1939	Took the initiative to form the Left Consolidation Committee (LCC).
September 1939	Outbreak of World War II in Europe as predicted by Subhas six months earlier; the Forward Bloc

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

	launched an anti-British and anti-war campaign all over the country.
March 1940	Organised All-India Anti-Compromise Conference near the venue of official meeting of the Indian National Congress at Ramgarh.
June 18, 1940	Delivered the Presidential Address at the Second All-India Forward Bloc Conference in Nagpur.
July 1, 1940	Launched the movement for removal of the Holwell monument from a public square in Calcutta. The monument was a reminder of the nation's slavery for 150 years.
July 3, 1940	Observed as 'Siraj Day'.
July 1940	The British rulers found the Forward Bloc a real menace to their war efforts and sent Subhas and hundreds of his co-workers to prison.
December 5, 1940	Released from jail and put under round-the-clock surveillance at his ancestral home on Elgin Road, Calcutta.
January 16-17, 1941	Great escape from his ancestral home in Calcutta.
March 18, 1941	Departed from Kabul.
April 4, 1941	Arrived in Berlin.
November 2, 1941	The first meeting of Free-India Centre.
November 1941	The Azad Hind Radio was inaugurated in Berlin.
December 1941	World War spread to the Pacific and Japan and Subhas decided to reach East Asia.
February 1942	Married Ms. Emilie Schenkl according to Indian rites. Their daughter, Anita, was born and grew up in Vienna and eventually took a Doctorate from the University of Vienna in 1965. Presently, she is Professor of Economics in Augsburg University and her husband is a member of the Parliament of Germany as a representative of the Socialist Party.
May 27, 1942	Subhas met Adolf Hitler in Germany.
June 1942	A meeting of Indian representatives from all over East Asia held at Bangkok under the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

	presidentship of Rash Behari Bose who invited Subhas to come over from Germany to East Asia and lead the Indian Independence Movement.
September 11, 1942	Went to Hamburg to open a new Indo-German Society.
February 8, 1943	Left for Far East with his assistant, Abid Hasan.
June 10, 1943	Had his first meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister, Tojo.
April 1941-Februrary 1943	Organised the Indian National Army (INA) during his exile in Germany.
June 13, 1943	Arrived in Tokyo after 90 days perilous submarine voyage from Germany to Japan via Sumatra.
July 2, 1943	Arrived in Singapore from Japan.
July 4, 1943	Rash Behari Bose handed over the Presidency of the Indian Independence Leauge (IIL) to Subhas at the historic conference of representatives of IIL held at the Cathay Cinema in Singapore.
July 5, 1943	Subhas reviewed the INA and gave his clarion call *Chalo Dilli* (On to Delhi) for the first time.
July 9, 1943	Addressed the first public gathering in Singapore attended by a record crowd of sixty thousand people.
August 14, 1943	Returned to Singapore after hectic tour of East Asian Countries.
September 3, 1943	Addressed a rally of 15,000 Indians at Penang and came back to Singapore 5 days later.
October 21, 1943	The Provisional Government of Azad Hind was established with Subhas as the Chief Executive of the Government. He issued a proclamation as the Head of the State, Prime-Minister and Supreme Commander of the INA.
October 22, 1943	Subhas inaugurated the Rani Jhansi Regiment Camp in Singapore.
October 24, 1943	The Provisional Government of Azad Hind declared War on Britain and America.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

November 1943	Attended the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo, and was received by the Emperor of Japan with all honours due to the Head of the State and of the Provisional Government of Free India.
November 6, 1943	At the Greater East Asia Conference, the Prime Minister of Japan, Tojo, announced the decision of the Japanese Government to hand over the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the Provisional Government.
December 31, 1943	Subhas set foot on Andaman, the first stretch of territory of Free India acquired by the Provisional Government; announced his decision to rename the Andaman & Nicobar Islands as the *Shaheed* (Martyrs) and *Swaraj* (Independence) Islands.
February 4, 1944	The INA fired its first shot in the 'Second War of India's Independence' on the Arakan front, and fought a successful action.
March 18 and 19, 1944	The INA led by Subhas crossed the Burma border and, for the first time, unfurled the national tricolour on the soil of India.
March 21, 1944	Subhas issued a proclamation to inform the World of the INA's entry to the Indian soil.
April 5, 1944	Subhas inaugurated the first National Bank of Azad Hind in Rangoon.
June-July, 1944	Retreat of INA from the Indian soil began.
November 1944	Netaji addressed the students of Tokyo University.
Mid-May, 1945	Subhas and the INA soldiers reached Bangkok, a week after the surrender of Germany to the Allied Forces.
August 10, 1945	With the signing of Armistice by Japan the INA had to cease fighting; thereafter Subhas dashed back and issued elaborate instruction to the civilian and army wings of the Provisional Government as to their future.
August 16, 1945	Subhas flew from Singapore to Bangkok, and then to Saigon the next morning accompanied by a small party of his trusted lieutenants.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

August 17, 1945	Subhas left on his last-known flight from Saigon alongwith Colonel Habibur-Rahman, Deputy Chief of Staff of the INA in a medium-sized bomber.
August 22, 1945	Announcement of Tokyo Radio of the reported air crash involving Subhas Bose.

SOURCE

Ayer, S.A., "A Biographical Introduction" in *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Government of India: Publication Division, Delhi, 1983.

Abul Kalam, *Subhas Bose : Strategic Concepts, Diplomatic Thoughts*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1997.

Bhallacharya, S.N., *Netaji Subhas in Self Exile: His Finest Hour*, Metropolitan Book Co., New Delhi, 1975.

Bose Mihir, *The Lost Hero: A Biography of Subhas Bose*, Quartet Books Limited, London, 1982.

Bose, Sisir Kumar and Bose Sugata, (eds.) *Letters to Emilie Schenkl* 1934-1942, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994.

Bose, Sisir Kumar (ed.), *A Beacon Across Asia: A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1973.

Bose, Subhas Chandra, *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unifinished Autobiography and Collected Letters (1897-1921)*, Asia Publishing House, 1965.

Bose, Sisir Kumar (ed.) *Netaji and India's Freedom*, Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1975.

Bose, Sisir Kumar (ed.), *Netaji Collected Works*, Vols. 1 and 2, Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta, 1980.

Dubey, Muchkund (ed.), *Subhas Chandra Bose: The Man and His Vision*, Har Anand, New Delhi, 1998.

Gupta, V.P. and Gupta, Mohini, The *Quest For Freedom: A Study of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, Radha Publication, New Delhi, 1998.

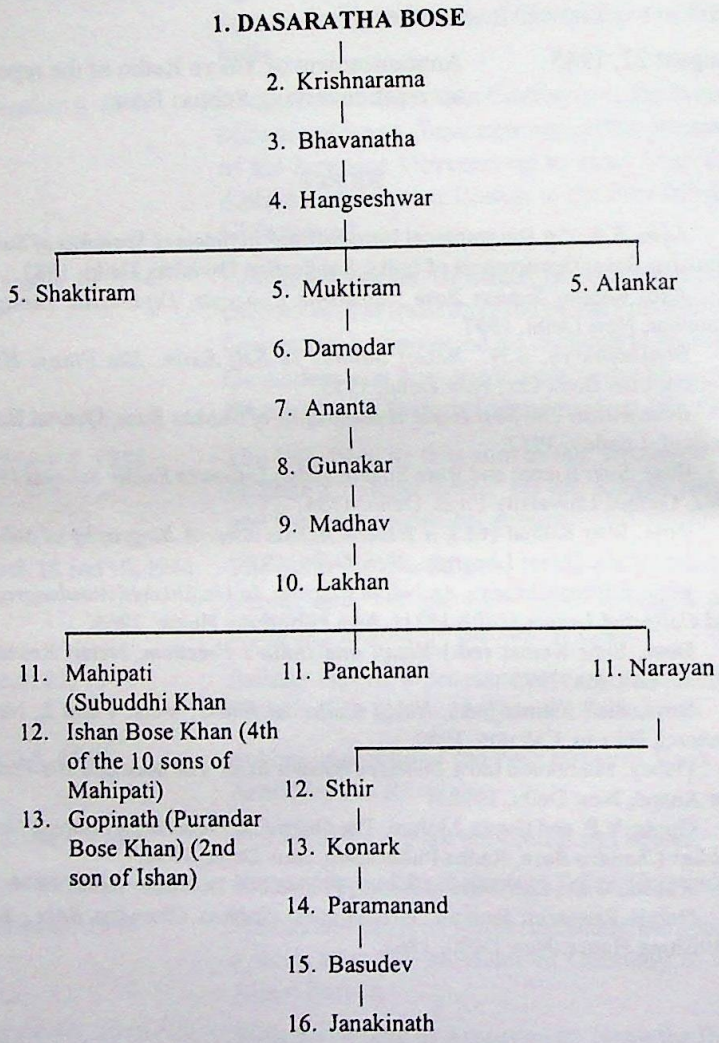
Khosla, G.D., *Last Days of Netaji*, Publication Division, Delhi, 1974.

Netaji Research Bureau, *Crossroads: Subhas Chandra Bose*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1962.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

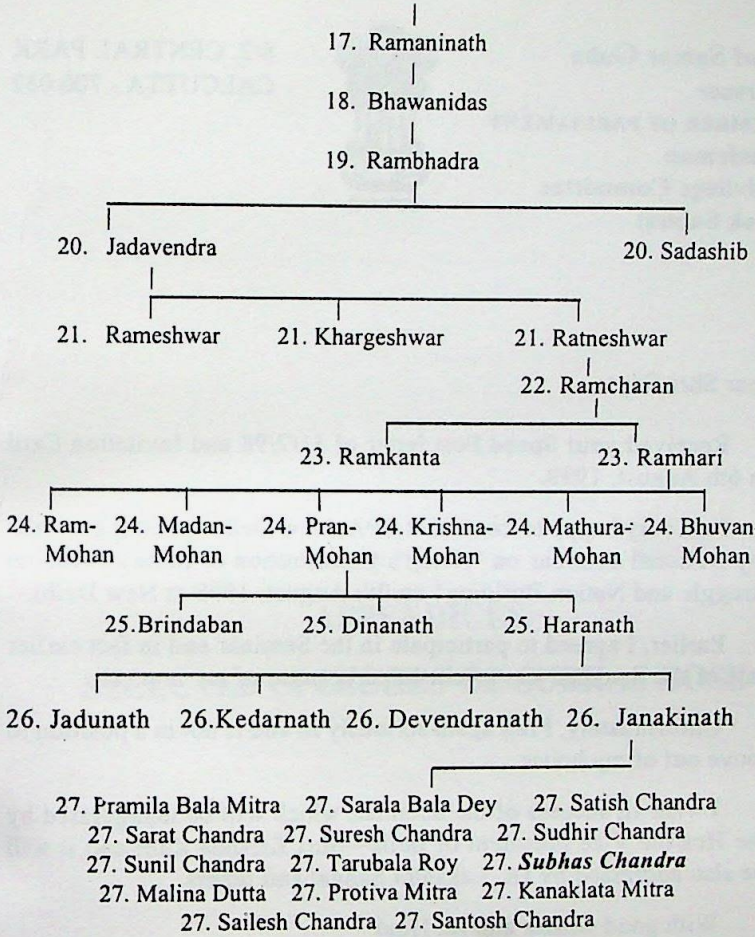
Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE BOSES OF MAHINAGAR



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



SOURCE: Subhas Chandra Bose, *An Indian Pilgrim—An Unfinished Autobiography*, eds. Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Prof Samar Guha
Former
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
Chairman
Privilege Committee
(Lok Sabha)

8/2, CENTRAL PARK
CALCUTTA - 700 032

Dear Shri Gupta,

Received your Speed Post letter of 31/7/98 and Invitation Card on 6th August, 1999.

I am very happy to know that IIPA, New Delhi is holding a Half-day National Seminar on "Netaji's Contribution to India's Freedom Struggle and Nation Building" on 9th August, 1998 at New Delhi.

Earlier, I agreed to participate in the Seminar and in fact earlier date of the Seminar was rescheduled because of my request.

Unfortunately, I fell again seriously ill and is not in a position to move out of my house.

I wish all success of the Seminar, which will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Vice President of India—Shri Krishna Kant and it will be also addressed by Dr. Lakshmi Sahgal and others.

With good wishes and Jai Hind

Yours sincerely,

Samar Guha

(SAMAR GUHA)

Shri M.C. Gupta, IAS (Retd.)
Director
Indian Institute of Public Administration
Iindraprastha Estate
Ring Road, New Delhi - 110 002

PS: Kindly ask Shri Jaytilak Guha Roy to send me the summary of the discussion, etc., to be held in the Seminar on Netaji.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

APPENDICES

SELECTED SPEECHES OF SUBHAS BOSE

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THE HARIPURA ADDRESS*

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

I AM deeply sensible of the honour you have done me my electing me as the President of the Indian National Congress for the coming year. I am not so presumptuous as to think for one moment that I am in any way worthy of that great honour. I regard it as a mark of your generosity and as a tribute to the youths of our country, but for whose cumulative contribution to our national struggle, we would not be where we are today. It is with a sense of fear and trepidation that I mount the tribune which has hitherto been graced by the most illustrious sons and daughters of our motherland. Conscious as I am of my numerous limitations, I can only hope and pray that with your sympathy and support I may be able in some small measure to do justice to the high office which you have called upon me to fill.

At the outset, may I voice your feelings in placing on record our profound grief at the death of Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru, Acharaya Jagadish Chandra Bose and Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji? Shrimati Swaruprani Nehru was to us not merely the worthy consort of Pandit Motilal Nehru and the revered mother of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Her suffering, sacrifice and service in the cause of India's freedom were such as any individual could feel proud of. As compatriots we mourn her death and our hearts go out in sympathy to Pandit Nehru and other members of the bereaved family.

To Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose India will always remain beholden for being the first to secure for her an honoured place in the modern scientific world. A nationalist to the core of his heart, Acharya Jagadish gave his life not merely to science, but to India as well. India knows it and is grateful for it. We convey our heartfelt sympathy to Lady Bose.

Through the untimely death of Dr. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, India has lost one of the brightest stars in her literacy firmament. His name, for years a household word in Bengal, was not less known in the literary world of India. But if Sarat Babu was great as a literature, he was perhaps greater as a patriot. The Congress in Bengal is distinctly poorer today because of his death. We send our sincerest condolence to the members of his family.

---

*Presidential Address at the 51st Session of the Indian National Congress held at Haripura in February, 1938

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Before I proceed further I should like to bow my head in homage to the memory of those who have laid down their lives in the service of the country since the Congress met last year at Faizpur. I should mention especially those who died in prison or in internment or soon after release from internment. I should refer in particular to Sjt. Harendra Munshi, a political prisoner in the Dacca Central Jail, who laid down his life the other day as a result of hunger-strike. My feelings are still too lacerated to permit me to say much on this subject. I shall only ask you if there is not 'something rotten in the state of Denmark' that such bright and promising souls as Jatin Das, Sardar Mahabir Singh, Ramkrishna Namadas, Mohit Mohan Maitra, Harendra Munshi and others should feel the urge not to live life but to end it.

When we take a bird's eye view of the entire panorama of human history, the first thing that strikes us is the rise and fall of empires. In the East as well as in the West, empires have invariably gone through a process of expansion and after reaching the zenith of prosperity, have gradually shrunk into insignificance and sometimes death. The Roman empire of the ancient times and the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires of the modern period are striking examples of this law. The empires in India—The Maurya, the Gupta and the Moghul empires—are no exceptions to this rule. In the face of these objective facts of history, can anyone be so bold as to maintain that there is in store a different fate for the British empire? That empire stands today at one of the crossroads of history. It will either go the way of other empires or it must transform itself into a federation of free nations. Either course is open to it. The Czarist empire collapsed in 1917 but of its debris sprang the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There is still time for Great Britain to take a leaf out of Russian history. Will she do it?

The British empire is a hybrid phenomenon in politics. It is a peculiar combination of self-governing countries, partially self-governing dependencies and autocratically-governed colonies. Constitutional device and human ingenuity may bolster up this combination for a while, but not for ever. If the internal incongruities are not removed in good time, then quite apart from external pressure, the empire is sure to break down under its own strain. But can the British empire transform itself into a federation of free nations with one bold sweep? It is for the British people to answer this question. One thing, however, is certain. This transformation will be possible only if the British people become free in their own homes—only if Great Britain becomes a socialist state. There is an inseparable connection between the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and the colonies abroad. As Lenin pointed out long ago, "reaction in Great Britain is strengthened and fed by the enslavement of a number

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of nations". The British aristocracy and bourgeoisie exist primarily because there are colonies and overseas dependencies to exploit. The emancipation of the latter will undoubtedly strike at the very existence of the capitalist ruling classes in Great Britain and precipitate the establishment of a socialist regime in that country. It should, therefore, be clear that a socialist order in Great Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonialism and that we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British empire are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well.

It is well-known truism that every empire is based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any empire in the world has practised this policy so skilfully, systematically and ruthlessly as Great Britain. In accordance with this policy, before power was handed over to the Irish people, Ulster was separated from the rest of Ireland. Similarly, before any power is handed over to the Palestinians, the Jews will be separated from the Arabs. An internal partition is necessary in order to neutralise the transference of power. The same principle of partition appears in a different form in the new Indian Constitution. Here we find an attempt to separate the different communities and put them into water-tight compartments. And in the Federal Scheme there is juxtaposition of autocratic princes and democratically elected representatives from British India. If the new Constitution is finally rejected, whether owing to the opposition of British India or owing to the refusal of the princes of joining it, I have no doubt that British ingenuity will seek some other constitutional device for partitioning India and thereby neutralising the transference of power to the India people. Therefore, any Constitution for India which emanates from Whitehall must be examined with the utmost care and caution.

The policy of divide and rule, though it has its obvious advantages, is by no means an unmixed blessing for the ruling power. As a matter of fact, it creates new problems and new embarrassments. Great Britain seems to be caught in the meshes of her own political dualism resulting from her policy of divide and rule. Will she please the Muslim or the Hindu in India? Will she favour the Arab or the Jew in Palestine—the Arab or the Kurd in Iraq? Will she side with the King or the Wafd in Egypt? The same dualism is visible outside the empire. In the case of Spain, British politicians are torn between such alternatives as Franco and the lawful government—and in the wider field of European politics, between France and Germany. The contradictions and inconsistencies in British foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogeneous composition of her empire. The British Cabinet has to please the Jews

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

because she cannot ignore Jewish high finance. On the other hand, the India Office and Foreign Office have to placate the Arabs because of imperial interests in the Near East and India. The only means whereby Great Britain can free herself from such contradictions and inconsistencies is by transforming the empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history. But if she fails, she must reconcile herself to the gradual dismemberment of a vast empire where the sun is supposed not to set. Let the lesson of the Austro-Hungarian empire be not lost on the British people.

The British empire at the present moment is suffering from strain at a number of points. Within the empire, in the extreme West, there is Ireland and in the extreme East, India. In the middle lies Palestine with the adjoining countries of Egypt and Iraq. Outside the empire, there is the pressure exerted by Italy in the Mediterranean and Japan in the Far East, both of these countries being militant, aggressive and imperialist. Against this background of unrest stands Soviet Russia, whose very existence strikes terror into the heart of the ruling classes in every imperialist state. How long can the British empire withstand the cumulative effect of this pressure strain?

Today, Britain can hardly call herself 'the Mistress of the Seas'. Her phenomenal rise in the 18th and 19th Centuries was the result of her sea power. Her decline as an empire in the 20th Century will be the outcome of the emergence of a new factor in world History—Air Force. It was due to this new factor, Air Force, that an impudent Italy could successfully challenge a fully mobilised British Navy in the Mediterranean. Britain can rearm on land, sea and air up to the utmost limit. Battleships may still stand up to bombing from the air, but air force as a powerful element in modern warfare has come to stay. Distances have been obliterated and despite all anti-aircraft defences, London lies at the mercy of any bombing squadron from a continental centre. In short, air force has revolutionised modern warfare, destroyed the insularity of Great Britain and rudely disturbed the balance of power in world politics. The clay feet of a gigantic empire now stand exposed as these have never been before.

Amid this interplay of world forces India emerges much stronger than she has ever been before. Ours is a vast country with a population of 350 millions. Our vastness in area and in population has hitherto been a source of weakness. It is today a source of strength if we can only stand united and boldly face our rulers. From the standpoint of Indian unity the first thing to remember is that the division between British India and the Indian states in an entirely artificial one. India is one and the hopes and aspirations of the people of British India and of the Indian states are identical. Our goal is that of an Independent India and in my view that goal can be attained

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

only through a federal republic in which the provinces and the states will be willing partners. The Congress has, time and again, offered its sympathy and moral support to the movement carried on by the states' subjects for the establishment of democratic government in what is known as Indian India. It may be that at this moment our hands are so full that the Congress is not in a position to do more for our compatriots in the states. But even today there is nothing to prevent individual Congressmen from actively espousing the cause of the states' subjects and participation in their struggle. There are people in the Congress like myself who would like to see the Congress participating more actively in the movement of the states' subjects. I personally hope that in the near future it will be possible for the Indian National Congress to take a forward step and offer a helping hand to our fellow-fighters in the states. Let us not forget that they need our sympathy and our help.

Talking of Indian unity the next thing that strikes us is the problem of the minorities. The Congress has, from time to time, declared its policy on this question. The latest authoritative pronouncement made by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Calcutta in October, 1937, runs thus:

> The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy in regard to the rights of the minorities in India and stated that it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objectives of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may cooperate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India. The objective of unity and mutual cooperation in a common freedom does not mean the suppression in any way of the rich variety and cultural diversity of Indian life, which have to be preserved in order to give freedom and opportunity to the individual as well as to each group to develop unhindered according to its capacity and inclination.

In view, however, of attempts having been made to misinterpret the Congress policy in this regard, the All-India Congress Committee desire to reiterate this policy. The Congress has included in its resolution on Fundamental Rights that:

(i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality;

(ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to the public order and morality;

(iii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected;

(iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex;

(v) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office or power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling;

(vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of state or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public;

(vii) The state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions;

(viii) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage;

(ix) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

These clauses of the Fundamental Rights resolution make it clear that there should be no interference in matter of conscience, religion, or culture, and a minority is entitled to keep its personal law without any change in this respect being imposed by the majority.

The position of the Congress in regard to the communal decision has been repeatedly made clear in Congress resolutions and finally in the Election Manifesto issued last year. The Congress is opposed to this decision as it is anti-national, anti-democratic and is a barrier to Indian freedom and the development of Indian unity. Nevertheless, the Congress has declared that a change in or suppression of the Communal Decision should only be brought about by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned. The Congress has always welcomed and is prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to bring such a change by mutual agreement.

In all matters affecting the minorities in India, the Congress wishes to proceed by the operation and through their good will in a common undertaking and for the realisation of a common aim which is the freedom and betterment of all the people of India.

The time is opportune for renewing our efforts for the final solution of the problem. I believe I am voicing the feelings of all Congressmen when I

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

say that we are eager to do our very best to arrive at an agreed solution, consistent with the fundamental principles of nationalism. It is not necessary for me to go into details as to the lines on which a solution should take place. Much useful ground has already been covered in past conferences and conservations. I shall merely add that only by emphasising our common interests, economic and political, can we cut across communal divisions and dissensions. A policy of live and let live in matters religious and an understanding in matters economic and political should be our objective. Though the Muslim problem looms large whenever we think of the question of the minorities and though we are anxious to settle this problem finally, I must say that the Congress is equally desirous of doing justice to other minorities and especially the so-called depressed classed whose number is a very large one. I would put it to the members of the minority communities in India to consider dispassionately if they have anything to fear when the Congress programme is put into operation. The Congress stands for the political and economic rights of the Indian people as a whole. If it succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefitted as much as any other section of the Indian population. Moreover, if after the capture of political power, national reconstruction takes place on socialistic lines—as I have no doubt it will—it is the 'have nots' who will benefit at the expense of the 'haves' and the Indian masses have to be classified among the 'have-nots'. There remains but one question which may be a source of anxiety to the minorities, *viz.*, religion and that aspect of culture that is based on religion. On this question the Congress policy is one of live and let live—a policy of complete non-interference in matters of conscience, religion and culture as well as of cultural autonomy for the different linguistic areas. The Muslims have, therefore, nothing to fear in the event of India winning her freedom—on the contrary, they have everything to gain. So far as the religious and social disabilities of the so-called depressed classes are concerned, it is well-known that during the last seventeen years the congress has left no stone unturned in the effort to remove them, and I have no doubt that the day is not far off when such disabilities will be things of the past.

I shall now proceed to consider the method which the Congress should pursue in the years to come as well as its role in the national struggle. I believe more than ever that the method should be *Satyagraha* or non-violent non-cooperation in the widest sense of the term, including civil disobedience. It would not be correct to call our method passive resistance. *Satyagraha*, as I understand it, is not merely passive resistance but active resistance as well though that activity must be of a non-violent character. It is necessary to remind our countrymen that *Satyagraha* or non-violent non-cooperation may have to be resorted to again. The acceptance of office in the provinces as an experimental measures should

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

not lead us to think that our future activity is to be confined within the limits of strict constitutionalism. There is every possibility that a determined opposition to the forcible inauguration of Federation may land us in another big campaign of civil disobedience.

In our struggle for independence we may adopt either of two alternatives. We may continue our fight until we have our full freedom and in the meantime decline to use any power that we may capture while on the march. We may, on the other hand, go on consolidating our position while we continue our struggle for *Purna Swaraj* or complete independence. From the point of view of principle, both the alternatives are equally acceptable and *a priori* considerations need not worry us. But we should consider very carefully at every stage as to which alternative would be more conducive to our national advancement. In either case, the ultimate stage in our progress will be the severance of the British connection. When that severance takes place and there is no trace left of British domination, we shall be in a position to determine our future relations with Great Britain through a treaty of alliance voluntarily entered into by both parties. What our future relations with Great Britain will or should be, it is too early to say. That will depend to a large extent on the attitude of the British people themselves. On this point I have been greatly impressed by the attitude of President de Valera. Like the President of Eire, I should also say that we have no enmity towards the British people. We are fighting Great Britain and we want the fullest liberty to determine our future relations with her. But once we have real self-determination, there is no reason why we should not enter into the most cordial relations with the British people.

I am afraid there is a lack of clarity in the minds of many Congressmen as to the role of the Congress in the history of our national struggle. I know that there are friends who think that after freedom is won, the Congress Party having achieved its objective, should wither away. Such a conception is entirely erroneous. The party that wins freedom for India should be also the party that will put in to effect the entire programme of post-war reconstruction. Only those who have own power can handle it properly. If other people are pitchforked into seats of power which they were not responsible for capturing, they will lack that strength, confidence and idealism which is indispensable for revolutionary reconstruction. It is this which accounts for the difference in the Congress and non-Congress ministries even in the very narrow sphere of provincial autonomy.

No, there can be no question of the Congress Party withering away after political freedom has been won. On the contrary, the Party will have to take over power, assume responsibility for administration and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfil its role. If it were forcibly to liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-war Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continuous progress where the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction.

I know that it will be argued that the continuance of a party in such circumstances, standing behind the state, will convert that state into a totalitarian one; but I cannot admit the charge. The state will possibly become a totalitarian one, if there be only one party as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned. Moreover, the party itself will have a democratic basis, unlike, for instance, the Nazi Party which is based on the 'leader principle'. The existence of more than one party and the democratic basis of the Congress Party will prevent the future Indian state becoming a totalitarian one. Further, the democratic basis of the party will ensure that leaders are not thrust upon the people from above, but are elected from below.

Though it may be somewhat premature to give a detailed plan of reconstruction, we might as well consider some of the principles according to which our future social reconstruction should take place. I have no doubt in my mind that our chief national problems relating to the eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease and to scientific production and distribution can be effectively tackled only along socialistic lines. The very first thing which our future national government will have to do, would be to set up a commission for drawing up a comprehensive plan of reconstruction. This plan will have two parts—an immediate programme and a long-period programme. In drawing up the first part, the immediate objectives which will have to be kept in view will be three-fold—*first*, to prepare the country for self-sacrifice; *secondly*, to unify India; and *thirdly*, to give scope for local and cultural autonomy. The second and third objectives may appear to be contradictory, but they are nor really so. Whatever political talent or genius we may possess as a people, will have to be used in reconciling these two objectives. We shall have to unify the country so that we may be able to hold India against any foreign invasion. While unifying the country through a strong central government, we shall have to put all the minority communities as well as the provinces at their ease, by allowing them a large measure of autonomy in cultural as well as governmental affairs. Special efforts will be needed to keep our people together when the load of foreign domination is removed, because alien rule has demoralised and disorganised us to a degree. To promote national unity we shall have to develop our *lingua franca* and a common script. Further, with the help of such modern scientific contrivances as aeroplanes, telephone, radio, films,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

television, etc., we shall have to bring the different parts of India closer to one another and through a common educational policy we shall have to foster a common spirit among the entire population.

So far as our *lingua franca* is concerned, I am inclined to think that the distinction between Hindi and Urdu is an artificial one. The most natural *lingua franca* would be mixture of the two, such as is spoken in daily life in large potions of the country and this common language may be written in either of the two scripts, Nagari or Urdu. I am aware that there are people in India who strongly favour either of the two scripts to the exclusion of the other. Our policy, however, should not be one of exclusion. We should allow the fullest attitude to use either script. At the same time, I am inclined to think that the ultimate solution, and the best solution would be the adoption of a script that would bring us into line with the rest of the world. Perhaps, some of our countrymen will gape with horror when they hear of the adoption of the Roman script, but I would beg them to consider this problem from the scientific and historical point of view. If we do that, we shall realise at once that there is nothing sacrosanct in a script. The Nagari script, as we know it today, has passed through several phases of evaluation. Besides, most of the major provinces of India have their own script and there is the Urdu script which is used largely by the Urdu-speaking public in India and by both Muslims and Hindus in provinces like the Punjab and Sind. In view of such diversity, the choice of a uniform script for the whole of India should be made in a thoroughly scientific and impartial spirit, free from bias of every kind. I confess that there was a time when I felt that it would be anti-national to adopt a foreign script. But my visit to Turkey in 1934 was responsible for converting me. I then realised for the first time what a great advantage it was to have the same script as the rest of the world. So far as our masses are concerned, since more than 90 per cent are illiterate and are not familiar with any script, it will not matter to them which script we introduce when they are educated. The Roman script will, moreover, facilitate their learning a European language. I am quite aware how unpopular the immediate adoption of the Roman script would be in our country. Nevertheless, I would beg my countrymen to consider what would be the wisest solution in the long run.

With regard to the long-period programme for a free India, the first problem to tackle is that of our increasing population. I do not desire to go into the theoretical question as to whether India is over-populated or not. I simply want to point out that where poverty, starvation and disease are stalking the land, we cannot afford to have our population mounting up by thirty million during a single decade. If the population goes up by the leaps and bounds, as it has done in the recent past, our plans are

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

likely to fall through. It will, therefore, be desirable to restrict our population until we are able to feed, clothe and educate those who already exist. It is not necessary at this stage to prescribe the methods that should be adopted to prevent a further increase in population, but I would urge that public attention be drawn to this question.

Regarding reconstruction, our principal problem will be how to eradicate poverty from our country. That will require a radical reform of our land system, including the abolition of landlordism. Agricultural indebtedness will have to be liquidated and provision made for cheap credit for the rural population. An extension of the cooperative movement will be necessary for the benefit of both producers and consumers. Agriculture will have to be put on a scientific basis with a view to increasing the yield from the land.

To solve the economic problem agricultural improvement will not be enough. A comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownerships and state-control will be indispensable. A new industrial system will have to be built up in a place of the old one which has collapsed as a result of mass production abroad and alien rule at home. A planning commission will have to carefully consider and decide which of the home industries could be revived despite the competition of modern factories and in which sphere large scale production should be encouraged. However much we may dislike modern industrialism and condemn the evils which follow in its train, we cannot go back to the pre-industrial era, even if we desire to do so. It is well, therefore, that we should reconcile ourselves to industrialisation and devise means to minimise its evils and at the same time explore the possibilities of reviving cottage industries where there is a possibility of their surviving the inevitable competition of factories. In a country like India, there will be plenty of room for cottage industries, especially in the case of industries including hand-spinning and hand-weaving allied to agriculture.

Last but not the least, the state on the advise of a planning commission, will have to adopt a comprehensive scheme for gradually socialising our entire agricultural and industrial system in the sphere of both production and appropriation. Extra capital will have to be procured for this, whether through internal or external loans or through inflation.

Opposing or resisting the provincial part of the Constitution will be hardly possible now, since the Congress Party has accepted office in seven out of eleven provinces. All that could be done would be to strengthen and consolidate the Congress as a result of it. I am one of those who were not in favour of taking office—not because there was something inherently wrong in doing so, not because no good could come out of that policy, but because it was apprehended that the evil

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

effects of office acceptance would outweigh the good. Today I can only hope that my forebodings were unfounded.

How can we strengthen an consolidate the Congress while our ministers are in office? The first thing to do is to change the composition and character of the bureaucracy. If this is not done, the Congress Party may come to grief. In every country, the ministers come and go, but the steel frame of the permanent services remains. If that is not altered in composition and character, the governmental party and its cabinet are likely to prove ineffective in putting their principles into practice. This is what happened in the case of the Social Democratic Party in post-war Germany and perhaps in the case of the Labour Party in Great Britain in 1924 and 1929. It is the permanent services who really rule in every country. In India they have been created by the British and in the higher ranks they are largely British in composition. Their outlook and mentality are in most cases neither Indian nor national and a national policy cannot be executed until the permanent services become national in outlook and mentality. The difficulty, of course, will be that the higher ranks of the permanent services being, under the Statute, directly under the Secretary of State for India and not under the Provincial Government, it will not be easy to alter their composition.

Secondly, the Congress ministers in the different provinces should, while they are in office, introduce schemes of reconstruction in the spheres of education, health, prohibition, prison reforms, irrigation, industry, land reform, workers' welfare, etc. In this matter, attempts should be made to have as far as possible, a uniform policy for the whole of India. This uniformity could be brought about in either of two ways. The Congress ministers in the different provinces could themselves come together—as the Labour Ministers did in October 1937, in Calcutta—and draw up a uniform programme. Over and above this, the Congress Working Committee, which is the supreme executive of the Congress could lend a helping hand by giving directions to the different governments of the Congress-controlled provincial governments in the light of such advice as it may get from its own experts. This will mean that the members of the Congress Working Committee should be conversant with the problems that come within the purview of the Congress governments in the provinces. It is not intended that they should go into the details of administration. All that is needed is that they should have a general understanding of the different problems so that they could lay down the broad lines of policy. In this respect, the Congress Working Committee could do much more than it has hitherto done and unless it does so, I do not see how that body can keep an effective control over the different Congress ministries.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

At this stage I should like to say something more about the role of the Congress Working Committee. This Committee, in my judgement, is not merely the directing brain of the national army of fighters for freedom. It is also the Shadow Cabinet of Independent India and it should function accordingly. This is not an invention of my own. It is the role which has been assigned to similar bodies in other countries that have fought for their national emancipation. I am one of those who think in terms of a Free India— who visualise a national government in this country within the brief span of our own life. It is consequently natural for us to urge that the Working Committee should feel and function as the Shadow Cabinet of a Free India. This is what President de Valera's Republican Government did when it was fighting the British Government and was on the run. And this is what the Executive of the Wafd Party of Egypt did before it got into office. The members of the Working Committee while carrying on their day to day work should accordingly study the problems they will have to tackle in the event of their capturing political power.

More important than the question of the proper working of the Congress Governments is the immediate problem of how to oppose the inauguration of the federal part of the Constitution. The Congress attitude towards the proposed Federal Scheme has been clearly stated in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Wardha on February 4, 1938, which will be placed before this Congress after the Subjects Committee has considered it. That resolution says:

> The Congress has rejected the new Constitution and declared that a Constitution for India which can be accepted by the people must be based on Independence and can only be framed by the people themselves by means of a Constituent Assembly without the interference by any foreign authority. Adhering to this policy of rejection, the Congress has, however, permitted the formation in provinces of Congress Ministries with a view to strengthening the nation in its struggle for independence. In regard to the proposed federation, no such consideration applies even provisionally, or for a period, and the imposition of this Federation, will do grave injuries to India and tighten the bonds which hold her under the subjection of an imperialist domination. This scheme of Federation excludes from the sphere of responsibility the vital function of a government.
>
> The Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation but a real Federation must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units, enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by a democratic process of election.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Indian states participating in the Federation should approximate to the provinces in the establishment of representative institutions, responsible government, civil liberties and the method of election to the Federal House. Otherwise, Federation as it is now contemplated will, instead of building Indian unity, encourage separatist tendencies and involve the states in internal and external conflict.

The Congress, therefore, reiterates its condemnation of the proposed scheme and calls upon Provincial and Local Congress Committees and the people generally, as well as Provincial Governments and Ministries to prevent its inauguration.

In the event of an attempt being made to impose it, despite the declared will of the people, such an attempt must be combated in every way and the Provincial Government and Ministries must refuse to cooperate with it.

In case such a contingency arises, the AICC is authorised and directed to determine the line of action to be pursued in this regard.

I should like to add some more arguments to explain our attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the proposed Federation. One of the most objectionable features of the Federal Scheme relates to the commercial and financial safeguards in the new Constitution. Not only will the people continue to be deprived of any power over defence or foreign policy, but the major portion of the expenditure will also be entirely out of popular control. According to the budget of the Central Government for the year 1937-38, the army expenditure comes to 44.61 crores of rupees (£33.46 million) out of a total expenditure of 77.90 crores of rupees (£58.42 million)—that is, roughly 57 per cent of the total expenditure of the Central Government. It appears that the reserved side of the Federal Government which will be controlled by the Governor-General, will handle about 80 per cent of the Federal expenditure. Moreover, bodies like the Reserve Bank and the Federal Railways Authority are already created or will be created which will work as *imperium in imperio* uncontrolled by a Federal Legislature. The Legislature will be deprived of the powers it possesses at present to direct and influence railway policy, and it will not have any voice in determining the currency and exchange policy of the country which has a vital bearing on its economic development.

The fact that external affairs will be a reserved subject under the Federal Government will prejudicially affect the freedom of the Indian Legislature to conclude trade agreements and will seriously restrict, in effect, fiscal autonomy. The Federal Government will not be under any

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

constitutional obligation to place such trade agreements before the Legislature for their ratification, even as they decline at present to give an undertaking to place the Indo-British Trade Agreement before the Indian Legislative Assembly. The so-called fiscal autonomy convention will have no meaning unless it is stipulated that no trade agreement on behalf of India shall be signed by any party without its ratification by the Indian Legislature. In this connection, I would like to state that I am definitely of opinion that India should enter into bilateral trade agreements with countries like Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy and the United States of America with whom she had close trade relations in the past. But under the new Constitution, it will not be within the power of the Federal Legislature to force the Federal Government to enter into such bilateral trade agreements.

The iniquitous and inequitable commercial safeguards embodied in the Act will make it impossible for any effective measure to be adopted in order to protect and promote Indian national industries especially where they might, as they often do, conflict with British commercial or industrial interests. In addition to the Governor-General's special responsibility to see that provisions with regard to discrimination, as laid down in the Act, are duly carried out, it is also his duty to prevent any action which would subject British goods imported into India to any kind of discriminatory or penal treatment. A careful study of these stringent and wide provisions will show that India can adopt no measures against British competition which the Governor-General cannot, in effect, stultify or veto, whether in the legislative or in the administrative sphere. It is, of course, preposterous to permit foreigners in this country to compete with the nationals on equal terms and there can be no genuine *Swaraj* if India is to be denied the power to devise and adopt a national economic policy including the right, if her interests so require, of differentiating between nationals and non-nationals.

In a famous article in *Young India*, under the caption "The Giant and the Dwarf" written soon after the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931, Mahatma Gandhi declared plainly that "to talk of no discrimination between Indian interests and English or European, is to perpetuate Indian heritage. What is equality of rights between a giant and a dwarf?" Even the meagre powers enjoyed by the Central Legislature at present to enact a measure like the reservation of the Indian coastal trade for Indian-owned and Indian-managed vessels has been taken away under the so-called reformed Constitution. Shipping is a vital industry which is essential for defensive as well as for economic purpose, but all the accepted and legitimate methods of developing this key industry including those adopted even by several British Dominions are

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

henceforth rendered impossible for India. To justify such limitations on our sovereignty on the ground of 'reciprocity' and 'partnership' is literally to add insult to injury. The right of the future Indian Parliament to differentiate or discriminate between nationals and non-nationals, whenever Indian interests require it, should remain intact and this right we cannot sacrifice on any account. I would like in this connection to cite the Irish parallel. The Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act of 1935 provides for a distinct Irish citizenship in connection with the electoral system, entry into public life, merchant shipping law, aircraft, as also in connection with special privileges which it thought proper to reserve for Irish nationals, such as those conferred through measures for assisting Irish industry. Irish citizenship, in other words, is distinct from British, which cannot claim equal rights in the State of Eire (or Ireland) on the basis of British citizenship, which is not recognised there. I feel that India must similarly seek to develop her own distinct nationality and establish a citizenship of her own.

While on the question of fiscal autonomy and commercial safeguards, I might refer briefly to the need of an active foreign trade policy for India. India's foreign trade should be viewed not in a haphazard or piecemeal manner as is often done in order to provide some immediate or temporary benefit to British industry, but in a comprehensive manner so as to coordinate India's economic development with its export trade on the one hand and its external obligation on the other. The very nature of India's export trade makes it essential that it should not have any restrictive agreement with England such as would jeopardise its trade with the various non-empire countries which have been in several respects its best customers, on such as would tend to weaken India's bargaining power *vis-a-vis* other countries. It is unfortunate that the protected negotiations for an Indo-British Trade Agreement are still proceeding, while the Ottawa Agreement, even after the expiry of its notice-period and despite the decision of the Legislative Assembly to terminate it, still continues, and along with the differential duties of British steel and textiles, the said Ottawa agreement secures the prevailing advantages for British industries. There is no doubt that under the existing political conditions, any trade agreement between England and India is bound to be of an unequal character because our present political relationship would weigh the scales heavily in favour of England. There is also no doubt that the British preferential system is political in origin and before we permit non-Indian vested interests to be established or consolidated in this country under the shelter of a trade agreement, we should be careful as to its political repercussions and economic consequences. I trust that the present Indo-British Trade negotiations will not be allowed

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

to impede the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements with other countries whenever possible and that no such trade agreement will be signed by the Government of India unless it is ratified by the Indian Legislature.

From the above, it will be quite clear that there is no analogy between the powers of the Provincial Ministries and those of the proposed Federal Ministry. Moreover, the composition of the Federal Legislature is reactionary to a degree. The total population of the Indian states is roughly 24 per cent of that of the whole of India. Nevertheless, the Rulers of the States, not their subjects, have been given 33 per cent of the seats in the Lower House and 40 per cent in the Upper House of the Federal Legislature. In these circumstances, there is no possibility, in my opinion, of the Congress altering its attitude towards the Federal Scheme at any time. On our success in resisting the imposition of Federation by the British Government will depend our immediate political future. We have to fight Federation by all legitimate and peaceful means—not merely along constructional lines—and in the last resort, we may have to resort to mass civil disobedience which is the ultimate sanction we have in our hands. There can be little doubt that in the event of such a campaign being started in the future, the movement will not be confined to British India but will spread among the state's subjects.

To put up an effective fight in the near future, it is necessary to put our own house in order. The awakening among our masses during the last few years has been so tremendous that new problems have arisen concerning our party organisation. Meetings attended by fifty thousand men and women are a usual occurrence nowadays. It is sometimes found that to control such meetings and demonstrations, our machinery is not adequate. Apart from these passing demonstrations, there is the bigger problem of mobilising this phenomenal mass energy and enthusiasm and directing them along proper lines. But have we got a well-disciplined Volunteer Corps for this purpose? Have we got a cadre of officers for your national service? Do we provide any training for our budding leaders, for our promising young workers? The answers to these questions are too patent to need elaboration. We have not yet provided all these requirements of a modern political party, but it is high time that we did. A disciplined Volunteer Corps manned by trained officers is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, education and training should be provided for our political workers so that we may produce a better type of leaders in future. This sort of training is provided by political parties in Britain through Summer Schools and other institutions—and is a speciality in totalitarian states. With all respect to our workers who have played a glorious part in our struggle, I must confess that there is room for more talent in our party. This defect can be made up partly by recruiting promising young men for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the Congress and partly by providing education and training for those whom we already have. Everybody must have observed how some European countries have been dealing with this problem. Though our ideals and methods of training are quite different from theirs, it will be admitted on all hands that a thorough scientific training is a requisite for our workers. Further, an institution like the Labour Service Corps of the Nazis deserves careful study and with suitable modification may prove beneficial to India.

While dealing with the question of enforcing discipline within our own party, we have to consider a problem which has been causing worry and embarrassment to many of us. I am referring to organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas and their relations with the Indian National Congress. There are two opposing schools of thought on this question—those who condemn any organisations that are outside the Congress and those who advocate them. My own view is that we cannot abolish such organisations by ignoring or condemning them. They exist as objective facts and since they have come into existence and show no signs of liquidating themselves, it should be manifest that there is a historical necessity behind them. Moreover, such organisations are to be found in other countries. I am afraid that whether we like it or nor, we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence. The only question is how the Congress should treat them. Obviously, such organisations should not appear as a challenge to the National Congress which is the organ of mass struggle for capturing political power. They should, therefore, be inspired by Congress ideals and methods and work in close co-operation with the Congress. To ensure this, Congress workers should in large numbers participate in trade union and peasant organisations. From my own experience of trade union work I feel that this could easily be done without landing oneself in conflict or inconsistency. Cooperation between the Congress and the other two organisations could be facilitated if the latter deal primarily with the economic grievances of the workers and peasants and treat the Congress as a common platform for all those who strive for the political emancipation of their country.

This brings us to the vexed problem of the collective affiliation of workers' and peasants' organisations of the Congress. Personally, I hold the view that the day will come when we shall have to grant this affiliation in order to bring all progressive and anti-imperialist organisations under the influence and control of the Congress. There will, of course, be difference of opinion as to the manner and the extent to which this affiliation should be given and the character and stability of such organisations will have to be examined before affiliation could be agreed to. In Russia, the united front of the Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers played a dominant part in the October Revolution—but, on the contrary, in Great

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Britain we find that the British Trade Union Congress exerts a moderating influence on the National Executive of the Labour Party. In India, we shall have to consider carefully what sort of influence organisations like the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas will exert on the Indian National Congress in the event of affiliation being granted and we should not forget that there is the possibility that the former may not have radical outlook if their immediate economic grievances are not involved. In any case, quite apart from the question of collective affiliation, there should be the closest cooperation between the National Congress and other anti-imperialist organisations and this objective would be facilitated by the latter adopting the principles and methods of the former.

There has been a great deal of controversy over the question of forming a party, like the Congress Socialist Party, within the Congress. I hold no brief for the Congress Socialist Party and I am not a member of it. Nevertheless, I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning. In the first place, it is desirable for the leftist elements to be consolidated into one party. Secondly, a leftist bloc can have a *raison d'etre* only if it is socialist in character. There are friends who object to such a bloc being called a party, but to my mind it is quite immaterial whether you call that bloc a group, league or party. Within the limits prescribed by the Constitution of the Indian National Congress, it is quite possible for a leftist bloc to have a socialist programme, in which case it can be very well called a group, league of party. But the role of the Congress Socialist Party, or any other party of the same sort, should be that of a left-wing group. Socialism is not an immediate problem for us—nevertheless, socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for socialism when political freedom has been won. And that propaganda can be conducted only by a party like the Congress Socialist Party, which stands for and believes in socialism.

There is one problem in which I have been taking a deep personal interest for some years and in connection with which I should like to make my submission—I mean the question of a foreign policy for India and of developing international contacts. I attach great importance to this work because I believe that in the years to come, international development will favour our struggle in India. But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it. The lesson of Egypt stands before us as an example. Egypt won her Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain without firing a shot, simply because she knew how to take advantage of the Anglo-Indian tension in the Mediterranean.

In connection with our foreign policy, the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their own political views may be. In this matter we should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a communist state, her diplomats have not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist states and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should, therefore, aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who feel sympathetic towards India. To create and develop such a nucleus, propaganda through the foreign press, through Indian-made films and through art exhibitions would be helpful. The Chinese, for example, have made themselves exceedingly popular in Europe through their art exhibitions. Above all, personal contacts are necessary. Without such personal contacts it would be difficult to make India popular in other countries. India students abroad could also help in this work, provided we in India look to their needs and requirements. There should be closer contact between Indian students abroad and the Indian National Congress at home. If we could send our cultural and educational films made in India, I am sure that India and her culture would become known and appreciated by people abroad. Such films would prove exceedingly useful to Indian students and Indian residents in other countries, who at present are like our non-official ambassadors.

I do not like the word propaganda—there is an air of falsity about it. But I insist that we should make Indian and her culture known to the world. I say this because I am aware that such efforts will be welcomed in every country in Europe and America. If we go ahead with this work, we shall be preparing the basis for our future embassies and legations in different lands. We should not neglect Great Britain either. We have even in that country a small but influential group of men and women who are genuinely sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. Among the rising generation and students, in particular, interests in and sympathy for India is rapidly on the increase. One has only to visit the universities of Great Britain to realise that.

To carry on this work effectively, the Indian National Congress should have its trusted agents in Europe, Asia, Africa and in North, Central and South America. It is a pity that we have so far neglected Central and South America where there is profound interest in India. The Congress should be assisted in this work of developing international contact by cultural organisations in India, working in the field of international culture and by the Indian Chambers of Commerce working in the sphere of international commerce. Further, Indians should make it a point to attend every international congress of conference; participation in such conferences is a very useful and healthy form of propaganda for India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

While talking of international contacts, I should remove a misgiving which may be present in some minds. Developing international contacts does not mean intriguing against the British Government. We need not go in for such intrigues and all our methods should be above board. The propaganda that goes on against India all over the world is to the effect that India is an uncivilised country and it is inferred there from that the British are needed in order to civilise us. As a reply, we have only to let the world know what we are and what our culture is like. If we can do that, we shall create such a volume of international sympathy in our favour that India's case will become irresistible before the bar of world opinion.

I should not forget to refer to the problems, the difficulties and the trials which face our countrymen in different parts of Asia and Africa—notably in Zanzibar, Kenya, South Africa, Malaya and Ceylon. The Congress has always taken the keenest interest in their affairs and will continue to do so in future. If we have not been able to do more for them it is only because we are still slaves at home. A free India will be a healthy and potent factor in world politics and will be able to look after the interests of its nationals abroad.

I must in this connection stress the desirability and necessity of developing closer cultural relations with our neighbours, *viz.*, Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal, China, Burma, Siam, Malay States, East Indies and Ceylon. It would be good for both parties if they knew more of us and we knew more of them. With Burma and Ceylon, in particular, we should have the most intimate cultural intercourse, in view of our age-long contacts.

Friends, I am sorry I have taken more of your time than I had intended at first, but I am now nearing the and of my address. There is one important matter—the burning topic of the day—to which I should now draw your attention—the question of the release of detenues and political prisoners. The recent hunger strikes have brought this question to the forefront and have focussed public attention on it. I believe that I am voicing the feelings of at least the rank and file of the Congress when I say that everything humanly possible should be done to expedite release. So far as the Congress ministries are concerned, it would be well to note that the record of some of them has not come up to public expectation. The sooner they satisfy the public demand, the better it will be for the Congress and for the people who are suffering in provinces ruled by non-Congress ministries. It is not necessary for me to labour this point and I fervently hope that in the immediate future, the public will have nothing to complain of so far as the record of the Congress ministries on this point is concerned.

It is not only the detenues and political prisoners in jail and detention who have their tale of woe. The lot of those who have been released is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sometimes no better. They often return home in shattered health, victims of fell diseases like tuberculosis. Grim starvation stares them in the face and they are greeted, not with the smiles but with the tears of near and dear ones. Have we no duty to those who have given of their best in the service of their country and have received nothing but poverty and sorrow in return? Let us, therefore, send our heart-felt sympathy to all those who have suffered for the crime of loving their country and let us all contribute our humble mite towards the alleviation of their misery.

Friends, one word more and I have done. We are faced with a serious situation today. Inside the Congress there are differences between the right and the left which it would be futile to ignore. Outside, there is the challenge of British Imperialism which we are called upon to face. What shall we do in this crisis? Need I say that we have to stand foursquare against all the storms that may beset our path and be impervious to all the designs that our rulers may employ? The Congress today is the one supreme organ of mass struggle. It may have its right bloc and its left—but it is the common platform for all anti-imperialist organisations striving for Indian emancipation. Let us, therefore, rally the whole country under the banner of the Indian National Congress. I would appeal specially to the leftist groups in the country to pool all their strength and their resources for democratising the congress and reorganising it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. In making this appeal, I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the leaders of the British Communist Party whose general policy with regard to India seems to me to be in keeping with that of the Indian National Congress.

In conclusion, I shall voice your feelings by saying that all India fervently hopes and prays that Mahatma Gandhi may be spared to our nation for many many years to come. India cannot afford to lose him and certainly not at this hour. We need him to keep our struggle free from bitterness and hatred. We need him for the cause of Indian Independence. What is more—we need him for the cause of humanity. Ours is a struggle not only against British Imperialism but against world imperialism as well, of which the former is the keystone. We are, therefore, fighting not for the cause of India alone but of humanity as well. India freed means humanity saved.

Bande Mataram

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS*

LET ME at the outset thank you all heartily for responding to my invitation and attending this conference in spite of inconvenience and loss of time. This conference is the first of its kind since the Congress undertook the responsibility of government in the provinces. Ever since it was decided to permit Congressmen to accept ministerial office, the problem of developing the industries of our country and the question of coordination of our resources with a view to that end has been engaging the earnest attention of the Working Committee.

At its sitting in August 1937, the Working Committee adopted the following resolutions:

> The Working Committee recommends to the Congress Ministries the appointment of a Committee of Experts to consider urgent and vital problems, the solution of which is necessary to any scheme of national reconstruction and social planning. Such solution will require extensive surveys and the collection of data, as well as a clearly defined social objective. Many of these problems cannot be dealt with effectively on a provincial basis and the interests of the adjoining provinces are interlinked. Comprehensive river surveys are necessary for formulation of a policy to prevent disastrous floods, to utilise the water for purposes of irrigation, to consider the problem of soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, and for the development of hydro-electric and other schemes. For this purpose the whole river valley will have to be surveyed and investigated, and large-scale state planning resorted to. The development and control of industries require also joint and coordinated action on the part of several provinces. The Working Committee advises therefore that, to begin with, an inter-provincial Committee of Experts be appointed to consider the general nature of the problems to be faced, and to suggest how, and in what order, these should be tackled. This Experts Committee may suggest the formation of special committees or boards to consider each such problem separately and to advise the provincial governments concerned as to the joint action to be undertaken.

---

*Full text of address delivered at the Industries Ministers' Conference in Delhi, October 2, 1938.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In May last, I convened in Bombay a conference of the Premiers of the seven Congress Provinces which was attended by some members of the Working Committee and also by several ministers. On that occasion, we discussed, as some of you will remember, the problems of industrial reconstruction, development of power resources and power supply as well as the general question of coordination and cooperation among the Congress Provinces. If I remember aright, those who attended the conference were of the view that the Working Committee should take the initiative in appointing a committee of experts to advise the Congress ministries on the above problem.

The Working Committee in July last adopted the following resolution:

> With reference to the resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on August 14-17, 1937, relating to the appointment of an Experts Committee to explore the possibilities of an All-India Industrial Plan, it is resolved that as a preliminary step the President be authorised to convene a conference of the Ministers of Industries at an early date and call for a report of the existing industries in different provinces and the needs and possibilities of new ones.

This Conference has been called in pursuance of his resolution.

It is needless for me to point out that with the problems of poverty and unemployment looming so large in our national life today, the question of utilising all our resources to the best advantage of the nation has assumed enormous importance. It is essential to improve the miserable lot of our peasantry and to raise the general standard of living. This cannot be achieved merely by the improvement of agriculture. Greater efficiency in agricultural methods, which is certainly desirable, may give us more and cheaper food and other necessities of life obtained from agriculture, but it will not solve the problem of poverty and unemployment. This may appear paradoxical but a little consideration will show that greater efficiency means that the same production in agriculture can be effected by less than the present number of agriculturists. In that eventuality the present situation of unemployment may become worse as a result of scientific agriculture.

How then shall we tackle this formidable problem? It is our aim to see that everybody—man, woman and child, is better clothed, better educated and has sufficient leisure for recreation and for cultural activity. If this aim is to be realised the quantity of industrial products has to be increased considerably; necessary works have to be organised and a large proportion of village population have to be diverted to industrial occupations.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

India is a country with resources similar to those of the United States of America. Her mineral wealth and other natural resources are superabundant. What is wanted is their systematic and organised exploitation by us in the best interest of the nation. Every country in the world that has grown rich and prosperous has done so through the fullest development of its industries. I shall here cite the example of only one country. Before the Great War, Russia was no better than India. She was mainly an agricultural country and nearly 70 per cent of the population were peasants, almost as miserable and wretched as our peasants today. Industries were in a backward state, power was undeveloped and was considered a luxury. She was without knowledge of her power resources, without experts and technicians. But within the last sixteen years she has passed from a community of primarily half-starved peasants to one of primarily well-fed and well-clothed industrial workers. She has achieved a considerable measure of success in her efforts to solve the problem of poverty, disease and famine which perpetually haunted her peasant population before the Revolution. This has been largely due to planned industrialisation of the whole country which presupposed a scheme of planned electrification. This marvellous progress in Russia in a very short period deserves our careful study and attention, irrespective of the political theories on which this State is based. I have quoted the example of Russia merely because of the resemblance which the pre-war conditions there bear to those in our country and to show how far a scheme of planned industrialisation can take us on the path to all-round prosperity.

We Congressmen of today have not only to strive for liberty but have also to devote a portion of our thought and energy to problems of national reconstruction, considering that we are within sight of power and *Swaraj* is no longer a dream to be realised in the distant future. National reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and our scientists. There is at the present day a lot of loose talk about schemes for bringing about industrial recovery in this land. To my mind the principal problem that we have to face is not industrial recovery but industrialisation. India is still in the pre-industrial stage of evolution. No industrial advancement is possible until we pass through the throes of an industrial revolution. If the industrial revolution is an evil, it is a necessary evil. We can only try our best to mitigate the ills that have attended its advent in other countries. Furthermore, we have to determine whether this revolution will be a comparatively gradual one, as in Great Britain, or a forced march as in Soviet Russia. I am afraid that it has to be a forced march in this country. In the world, as it is constituted today, a community which resists industrialisation has little chance of surviving international competition.

At this stage I should like to make it perfectly clear that there

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

need not be a conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. Such conflict, if any, arises out of misunderstanding. I am a firm believer in the need of developing our cottage industries, though I also hold that we have to reconcile ourselves to industrialisation. We find that in the most industrially advanced countries of Europe a large number of cottage industries still exist and thrive. In our country we know of cottage industries—like the handloom industry for instance—which have withstood competition with Indian and foreign mills and have not lost ground. Industrialisation does not therefore mean that we turn our back on cottage industries. Far from it. It only means that we shall have to decide which industries should be developed on a cottage basis and which on a large-scale basis. In the peculiar national economy which exists in India today, and in view of the limited resources of our people, we should do our very best to develop cottage industries, side by side with large-scale industries.

Industries may be roughly classified under three heads—heavy, medium and cottage industries. Heavy industries at the present time are no doubt the greatest value for the rapid economic development of the country. They form the backbone of our national economy. We cannot unfortunately make much headway in this direction until we capture power at the Centre and secure full control of our fiscal policy. The medium-scale industries can be started by business leaders with Government cooperation and help. As regards cottage industries, I have already observed that there need not be any conflict between their development and that of large-scale industries.

I should now like to make a few observations on the principles of national planning:

(a) Though from the industrial point of view the world is one unit, we should nevertheless aim at national autonomy especially in the field of our principal needs and requirements.

(b) We should adopt a policy aiming at the growth and development of the mother industries, *viz.*, power supply, metal production, machine and tools manufacture, manufacture of essential chemicals, transport and communication industries, etc.

(c) We should also tackle the problem of technical education and technical research. So far as technical education is concerned, as in the case of Japanese students, our students should be sent abroad for training in accordance with a clear and definite plan so that as soon as they return home they may proceed straight-away to build up new industries. So

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

far as technical research is concerned, we shall agree that it should be freed from governmental control of every kind.

(d) There should be a permanent national research council.

(e) Last but not the least, as a preliminary step towards national planning, there should be an economic survey of the present industrial position with a view to securing the necessary data for the National Planning Commission.

I shall now draw your attention to some of the problems which you may have to consider at this conference:

1. Arrangement for a proper economic survey of each province.
2. Coordination between cottage industries and large-scale industries with a view to preventing overlapping.
3. The advisability of having regional distribution of industries.
4. Rules regarding technical training in India and abroad for our students.
5. Provisions for technical research.
6. Advisability of adopting a committee of experts to give further advice on the problems of industrialisation.

If these problems could be tackled at this conference, I am sure that our purpose in meeting here this afternoon would be fulfilled. As I have indicated at the outset, we have to go into the question of the existing industries in the different provinces and the needs and possibilities of new ones. We can fulfil this task only if we tackle a variety of problems some of which I have indicated above.

In conclusion, I express the ardent hope that through your help and cooperation the conference may prove to be a success and may afford a powerful impetus to the industrial regeneration of our poor and exploited country.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

NATIONAL PLANNING*

IN THE beginning of his speech Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President, outlined the Industrial possibilities of the country and emphasised the need for the Committee to see that in whatever suggestions it made for the industrial regeneration of the country, the interests of the smaller village industries were strictly safeguarded. He said:

During the last few weeks, I have noticed an apprehension in certain quarters as to the possible effects of our efforts to industrial planning on the movement that has been going on since 1921 for the production of *Khadi* and the promotion of cottage industries under the auspices of the All-India Spinners Association and the All-India Village Industries Association respectively. It may be remembered that at Delhi I made it perfectly clear in my opening speech that there was no inherent conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. As a matter of fact, I divided industries into three classes: cottage, medium-scale and large-scale industries and I pleaded for a plan which would lay down the scope of each of these classes. Not only that. In the National Planning Commission we have reserved a seat for a representative of the All India Village Industries Association and a similar seat could also be arranged for in the National Planning Committee. It would be doing us a grave injustice, if it be urged or even apprehended that the promoters of the National Planning Commission want to sabotage the movement for the revival of cottage Industries.

Everybody knows or should know that even in the most industrially advanced countries in Europe and Asia, *e.g.*, Germany and Japan, there are plenty of cottage industries which are in flourishing condition. Why then should we have any apprehension with regard to our own country?

I may now add a few remarks on the relation between cottage industries and large-scale industries. Among large-scale industries, mother industries are the most important, because they aim at producing the means of production. They put into the hands of artisans necessary appliances and tools for facilitating quicker and cheaper production. For example, if in the city of Benares we could supply electrically driven looms along with electrical power at the rate of half-anna per unit, it would be possible for the artisans working in

*Inauguration speech at the first meeting of the All-India National Planning Committee at Bombay on December 17, 1938.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

their own homes to twin out *sarees* and embroidered cloth of different varieties at about five or six times the present rate of production and it would enable them to compare successfully with foreign imported goods of this description. With a good marketing organisation and an organisation for the supply of raw materials, these artisans can be rescued from the depths of poverty and misery to which they have fallen.

This is not the only instance which I can give. If the power industry and the machinery manufacturing industries are controlled by the state for the welfare of the nation, a large number of light industries like the manufacture of bicycles, fountain pens and toys can be started in this country by men of the artisan class working with the family as a unit. This is exactly what has been done in Japan. Success depends entirely upon the fact that power and machinery are extremely cheap and the Japanese Government have set up boards for the supply of raw materials and for proper marketing. I believe that this is the only way by means of which the handloom industry and the silk industry of our country can be revived.

The National Planning Committee will have to tackle specific problems. It will have first to direct its attention to the mother industries, *i.e.*, those Industries which make the other industries run successfully—such as the power industry, industries for the production of metals, heavy chemicals, machinery and tools, and communication industries like railway, telegraph, telephone and radio.

Our country is backward in respect of power supply compared with other industrially advanced countries. In the matter of electrical power particularly India's backwardness can be gauged from the fact that while in India we have at present only seven units per head, a backward country like Mexico has ninetysix units per head and Japan about five hundred units per head. In developing electrical power, the Government has squandered money: take the instance of the Mandi Hydro-Electric Scheme on which the Government has spent ten times as much as other countries have done on similar efforts. Now I wish an enquiry could be made into the manufacture of machinery and machine tools with a view to keeping up supplies in the event of interruption of communications with foreign countries owing to war or any other causes. The other key industries into which an inquiry should be started are the fuel industry, the metal production and heavy chemical industries. In this respect the resources of the country have not been properly investigated and, whatever little industry there is, is being controlled by foreigner, with the result that there is a lot of wastage. This is particularly true of the fuel industry.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The last key industry is the transport and communications industry which includes railways, steamships, electrical communications, radio, etc. At present the railways are controlled by the Railway Board, which is entirely under European management and only a small fraction of the requirements of the railways is manufactured in the country. As regards steam navigation, excepting coastal traffic, the entire communication is in the hands of non-Indians owing to unfair privileges enjoyed by them. Electrical goods are entirely supplied by foreign countries. As regards radio, I would like to suggest the setting up of a special sub-committee to investigate its possibilities.

Lastly, we will have to consider the most important problem of finding the necessary capital and credit for our plan industrialisation. Unless this problem is solved, all our plans will remain mere paper schemes and we shall not make any headway in our industrial progress.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM*

MR. MAYOR, Members of the Corporation and Friends,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have done me this afternoon. I am not so presumptuous as to think that I am in any way worthy of this great honour. On the contrary, I feel I am before you here this afternoon, in spite of my own shortcomings and limitation, as a symbol. I am here as a servant of the Indian National Congress and of the Indian public at large.

The very kind words which have fallen from your lips, Mr. Mayor, are a token of your generosity and the largeness of your heart. I take it that this generosity and largeness of heart show your real feelings towards the movement for Indian emancipation and towards all those who stand for the movement. We are living today in the midst of momentous times. You have referred also to international affairs. The day is gone when India was a country isolated from the rest of the world. Today, thanks to scientific achievement and to our own development, intellectual and moral, the whole world is one entity. What happens in one remote corner of the present world has far-reaching repercussions all over the globe. What we achieve in one city in India has, therefore, an importance not merely for the city, not merely for that country but, if I may say so, for the whole of humanity. This is true not only of political affairs but of civic affairs as well. I remember that during the few years that I had the occasion to spend in Europe, one of the most striking things which came to my notice was the achievement of the Socialist Municipality of Vienna. I believe nobody, no matter to what nationality he belonged, nobody who had occasion to see some of the achievements of that Municipality went back without a conviction that here was an achievement of much importance and significance to all those human beings who were interested in civic welfare. The Vienna Municipality, in the course of twelve years, provided housing accommodation for at least 2,00,000 persons and this arrangement for housing 2,00,000 persons was made without any additional taxation and without any loans. The entire charge was met from revenue and that revenue was collected by taxing amusements. We know that amusements are taxed in this country also but unfortunately the cities do not have the benefit of that taxation. What impressed me most, therefore, was the fact that so much could be achieved in one city without any additional taxation and

*Address to the Bombay Municipal Corporation, May 10, 1938 (emphasis added).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

without loans. That is why I was stressing the point that if you could achieve something in one city, that would have significance for the whole world.

It is exceedingly gratifying to note that in Bombay you have done away with limited franchise, that you are going to have adult franchise and that you have done away with nominations. Once again I will say that this has significance not only for the city of Bombay but for the whole of India and probably for other countries circumstanced like India. I think we should offer our congratulations to the present Government of Bombay for this change. We all wish that other cities, particularly the premier cities in India would take a leaf out of Bombay's history in this respect, introduce adult franchise and abolish the system of nominations. Now, Sir, the city of Bombay has a splendid situation surrounded by the sea. It is situated in the midst of fine natural scenery and the streets and buildings of Bombay—at least the better and richer parts of Bombay—can compare favourably with any city in this world; but that is only one side of the picture. We cannot forget the poverty which we have in this city and the slums in which our poorer countrymen have to live. We have, therefore, to address ourselves to the task of looking after the poorer and less fortunate sections of our countrymen. One of the greatest sons of India, Deshbandhu C.R. Das, once said that the ideal of civic bodies should be to make them poor men's corporations and in his first speech as the Mayor of Calcutta he laid down a programme of service to the poor. That programme was in many ways an ideal programme and has afforded an inspiration to the corporation of Calcutta and indirectly to other civic bodies as well. I think we have yet to travel a long way before we can honestly claim that our civic bodies are in reality poor men's corporations. There is a great deal of work to be done but what is needed most is inspiration, zeal and passion to serve the poor. It is that zeal, that passion which is the motive power that will enable us to travel along the path of service and to convert our cities into poor men's corporations. Sir, here in Bombay you have achieved much, specially, in the field of primary education. Your achievements in the sphere of education as also in other spheres have been of immense benefit to the citizens of Bombay and afforded an inspiration to others who have been entrusted with civic government elsewhere. I do hope that you will not rest content with what you have already done but that you will move with the times and travel fast in the direction of making your Municipal Corporation an ideal one.

Civic progress all over the world is moving in the direction of what may be called *Municipal Socialism*. 'Socialism' is a world which is some times a bogey to many, but I believe if we analyse and try to understand what socialism really stands for, and particularly what Municipal Socialism

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

stands for, we shall have no reason to fight shy of it. Consciously or unconsciously we have been moving in the direction of Municipal Socialism. Today every modern municipality has taken upon its shoulders immense duties which were unthinkable twenty or thirty years ago. The sphere of these social duties and responsibilities is, we may well say, fast expanding from day to day. Today a modern municipality has to furnish not merely pure drinking water, roads, lighting, etc., but it has to provide primary education and it has to look after the health of the population and tackle problems which the municipalities did not think of a few years ago. It is difficult to say where you are going to draw a line in future. You have in the case of the Birmingham Municipality a Municipal Bank and there are other municipalities in the West which have taken upon their shoulders duties and responsibilities which were unheard of and unthinkable a few decades ago. That is why I say that we have been moving consciously or unconsciously in the direction of Municipal Socialism. ***Municipal Socialism is nothing else but a collective effort for the service of the entire community.*** With this ideal before us, if we address ourselves to the task that awaits us and fulfil our duties in the most satisfactory manner, we shall be serving not merely the cause of our cities but the cause of humanity as well. We, who are interested in civic affairs, must take lessons not merely from the achievements of our own municipalities but we travel abroad, in Europe and America and also in the Far East, read literature and collect information about municipal problems there, so that we may work more efficiently and satisfactorily in our own cities. That is why I have stressed the point that your achievements here in Bombay are not only for your own fellow citizens but have a much wider significance.

Apart from the opportunities which we get by joining civic bodies—opportunities of civic service—there is another positive gain which we can derive out of our association with them and that is this: our work in connection with these bodies equips us for the larger duties in public life. I think it was Bryce, one of the foremost political thinkers of England, who said that the real school of democracy is local self-government. Professor Laski and others have sung in the same tune. Today it is realised by all political thinkers and students of civic affairs that the real school of democracy is local self-government. Therefore, there is a double advantage which we derive from our association with local bodies.

One word more and I have done. We are frequently told by foreigners that municipal development, like other attempts at social progress in this country, have been the result of our contact with the West and that before we came into intimate touch with Europe in the 18th and 19th Centuries, very little had been achieved in the direction of civic progress. Sir, I should like to take this opportunity of giving the lie direct to this charge. In the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sphere of municipal progress we are not creating something out of nothing, but we are building on ancient foundations. As in the sphere of village self-government we are building on very ancient foundations, so also in the sphere of local self-government we are doing the same. One has only to turn to the ancient relics of Mohenjodaro to realise what a high degree of civic achievement our forefathers in this ancient land could boast of. And after the age of Mohenjodaro if you come to the Mauryan empire and study the records and descriptions of the capital of the empire, *viz.*, Pataliputra, you will find that the city of Pataliputra was not only a highly developed city but the municipal government of that city had varied functions, functions which can compare very favourably with those of any modern municipality. For words like Mayor and other modern municipal terms you will find synonyms in our ancient language which were then in vogue. Then came what may be called the Dark Age in Indian history. During this Dark Age there was a set-back not only in municipal progress but in other departments of national life as well. But because of the Dark Age one should not conclude that prior to that, we had not achieved any progress in civic affairs. It is necessary to remind our countrymen about this, because unfortunately as a result of our age-long servitude we have to a large extent forgotten our own past. It is only on account of the researches, past and present, made by our own scholars and historians that have unraveled to us our own forgotten past, that we can now realise what progress our forefathers had once made in the domain of civic affairs. Therefore, we can claim that in the matter of civic progress we are building on ancient foundations. That I think will give us inspiration in addressing ourselves to the problems of the present and of the future.

Sir, I am afraid my reply which was meant to be a short one has developed into something like a sermon. I had no intention of sermonising. I had got up with the intention of primarily thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the very great honour you have done me—honour, which I take it, is meant for the Indian National Congress of which I am a humble servant. Let me express a fervent hope that your city will make progress from day to day in the domain of civic affairs and will set an example to other civic bodies in this country and abroad. I wish you, Sir, and the corporation all success in the arduous task that awaits you at present and in the future. Once again I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THE TRIPURI ADDRESS*

COMRADE CHAIRMAN, sister and brother delegates,

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honour you have done me by re-electing me to the presidential chair of the Indian National Congress, and also for the warm and cordial welcome you have given me here at Tripuri. It is true that at my request you have had to dispense with some of the pomp that is usual on such occasions. But I feel that this has not taken away one iota of the warmth and cordiality of your reception, and I hope that nobody will regret the curtailment of it on this occasion.

Friends, before I proceed any further I shall voice your feelings by expressing joy at the success of Mahatma Gandhi's mission to Rajkot and the termination of his fast in consequence thereof. The whole country now feels happy and tremendously relieved.

You are aware that the Wafdist delegation from Egypt have arrived in our midst as the guests of the Indian National Congress. You will join me in according the most hearty welcome to all of them. We are extremely happy that they found it possible to accept our invitation and make the voyage to India. We are only sorry that political exigencies in Egypt did not permit the President of the Wafd, Mustapha Nahas Pasha, personally to lead this delegation. Having had the privilege of knowing the President and leading members of the Wafdist Party, my joy today is all the greater. Once again I offer them, on behalf of our countrymen, a most hearty and cordial welcome.

Friends, this year promises to be an abnormal or extraordinary one in many ways. The presidential election this time was not of a humdrum type. The election was followed by sensational developments, culminating in the resignation of twelve out of the fifteen members of the Working Committee, headed by Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Another distinguished and eminent member of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though he did not formally resign, issued a statement which led everybody to believe that he had also resigned. On the eve of the Tripuri Congress the events at Rajkot forced Mahatma Gandhi to undertake a vow of fast unto death. And then the President arrived at Tripuri a sick man. It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the presidential address this year can claim to be a

*Presidential Address at Tripuri session of the Congress, March 10, 1939.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

departure from precedent in the matter of its length.

Since we met at Haripura in February 1938, several significant events have taken place in the international sphere. The most important of these is the Munich Pact of September 1938, which implied an abject surrender to Nazi Germany on the part of the Western powers, France and Great Britain. As the result of this, France ceased to be dominant power in Europe and the hegemony passed into the hands of Germany without a shot being fired. In more recent times, the gradual collapse of the Republican Government in Spain seems to have added to the strength and prestige of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics for the time being. But how long will that be possible? And what have France and Great Britain gained by trying to humiliate Russia?

There is no doubt that as the result of the recent international developments in Europe as well as in Asia, British and French Imperialism have received a considerable set-back in the matter of strength and prestige.

Coming to home politics, in view of my ill-health I shall content myself with referring to only a few important problems. In the first place, I must give clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely that the time has come for us to raise the issue of *Swaraj* and submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The time is long past when we could have adopted a passive attitude and waited for the Federal Scheme to be imposed on us. The problem is no longer as to when the Federal Scheme will be forced down our throats. The problem is as to what we should do if the Federal Scheme is conveniently shelved for a few years till peace is stabilised in Europe. There is no doubt that once there is stable peace in Europe, whether through a Four-Power Pact or through some other means, Great Britain will adopt a strong Empire policy. She is now showing some signs of trying to conciliate the Arabs as against the Jews in Palestine, because she is feeling insecure in the international sphere. In my opinion, therefore, we should submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum and give a certain time-limit; if no reply is received within this period or if an unsatisfactory reply is received, we should resort to such sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our national demand.

The sanction that we possess today is mass civil disobedience or *Satyagraha*. And the British Government today are not in a position a face a major conflict like an all-India *Satyagraha* for a long period. It grieves me to find that there are people in the Congress who are so

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British Imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner, I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism. With the Congress in power in eight provinces, the strength and the prestige of our national organisation have gone up. The mass movement has made considerable headway throughout British India. And last but not least, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian States. What more opportune moment could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of *Swaraj*, particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we make the most of our present favourable position; or we shall miss this opportunity which is a rare opportunity in the lifetime of a nation.

I have already referred to the awakening in India and to the awakening in the Indian States. I am definitely of the view that we should revise our attitude towards the States as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution. That resolution, as you are aware, put a ban on certain forms of activity in the States being conducted in the name of the Congress. Under that resolution neither parliamentary work nor the struggle in the States should be carried on in the name of the Congress, but since Haripura much has happened. Today we find that the Paramount Power is in league with the State authorities in most places. In such circumstances should we of the Congress not draw closer to the people of the States? I have no doubt in my mind as to what our duty is today. Besides lifting the above ban, the work of guiding the popular movement in the States for civil liberty and responsible government should be conducted by the Working Committee on a comprehensive and systematic basis. The work so far done has been of a piecemeal nature, and there has hardly been any system or plan behind it. But the time has come when the Working Committee should assume this responsibility and discharge it in a comprehensive and systematic way and, if necessary, appoint a special Sub-Committee for the purpose. The fullest use should be made of the guidance and cooperation of Mahatma Gandhi and of the cooperation of the All-India State Peoples' Conference.

I have referred earlier to the advisability of our making the final advance in the direction of *Swaraj*. That will need adequate preparation. In the first place, we shall have to take steps to remove ruthlessly whatever corruption or weakness has entered into our ranks, largely due to the lure of power. Next we shall have to work in close cooperation with all

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

anti-imperialist organisations in the country, particularly the Kisan movement and the trade union movement. All of the radical elements in the country must work in close harmony and cooperation, and the efforts of all anti-imperialist organisations must converge in the direction of a final assault on British Imperialism.

Friends, the atmosphere within the Congress today is clouded and dissensions have appeared. Many of our friends are consequently feeling depressed and dispirited. But I am an incorrigible optimist. The cloud that you see today is a passing one. I have faith in the patriotism of my countrymen and I am sure that before long we shall be able to tide over the present difficulties and restore unity within our ranks. A somewhat similar situation had arisen at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and thereafter, when Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru of hallowed memory started the Swaraj Party. May the spirit of my late *Guru,* of the revered Motilal and of the other great sons of India inspire us in the present crisis, and may Mahatma Gandhi, who is still with us to guide and assist the nation, help the Congress out of the present tangle. This is my earnest prayer.

Vande Mataram

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

VISION OF A FREE INDIA*

FRIENDS, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the high honour you have done me by requesting me to preside over the deliberations of the Sixth Session of the Maharashtra Provincial Conference. You are probably aware that I did not at first venture to accept the kind invitation, but by referring to the old relations between Bengal and Maharashtra some of my friends touched a most tender chord in my heart. The appeal then proved to be irresistible and every other consideration had to stand aside.

Before I proceed to place before you my view with regard to our present policy and programme, I would like to raise some fundamental problems and attempt to answer them. It is sometimes urged by foreigners that the new awakening in India is entirely an exotic product inspired by alien ideals and methods. This is by no means true. I do not for one moment dispute the fact that the impact of the West has helped to rouse us from intellectual and moral torpor. But that impact has restored self-consciousness to our people, and the movement that has resulted therefrom and which we witness today is a genuine *Swadeshi* movement. India has long passed through the traditional period of blind imitation—of reflex action, if you put it in psychological language. She has now recovered her own soul and is busy reconstructing her national movement along national lines and in the light of national ideals.

I agree with Sir Flinders Petrie that civilisations, like individuals grow and die in a cyclic fashion and that each civilisation has a certain span of life vouchsafed to it. I also agree with him that, under certain conditions, it is possible for a particular civilisation to be reborn after it has spent itself. When this rebirth is to take place, the vital impetus, the *elan vital,* comes not from without but from within. In this manner has Indian civilisation been reborn over and over again at the end of each cycle, and that is why India in spite of her hoary antiquity is still young and fresh.

The charge has often been levelled against us that since democracy is an Occidential institution, India, by accepting democratic or semi-democratic institutions, is being Westernised. Some European writers—Lord Ronaldshay for instance—go so far as to say that democracy is unsuited to the Oriental temparament and political advancement in India should not, therefore, be made in that direction. Ignorance and effrontery

*Presidential Address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Poona, May 3, 1928.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

could not go further. Democracy is by no means a Western institution; it is a human institution. Wherever man has attempted to evolve political institutions, he has hit upon this wonderful institution of democracy. The past history of India is replete with instances of democratic institutions. Mr. K.P. Jayaswal in his wonderful book, *Hindu Polity,* has dealt with this matter at great length and has given a list of 81 republics in ancient India. The Indian languages are also rich in terminology required in connection with political institutions of an advanced type. Democratic institutions still exist in certain parts of India. Among the Khasis of Assam, for instance, it is still the custom to elect the ruling chief by a vote of the whole clan; and this custom has been handed down from time immemorial. The principle of democracy was also applied in India in the government of villages and towns. The other day while visiting the Varendra Research Society Museum at Rajshahi in North Bengal, I was shown a very interesting copper-plate inscription in which it was stated that civic administration in the good old days was vested in a committee of five, including the *Nagar Sreshthi* (*i.e.*, our modern Mayor). With regard to village self-government, it is not necessary to remind an Indian audience about the village Panchayats—democratic institutions handed down to us from days of yore. Not only democratic but other socio-political doctrines of an advanced character were not unknown to India in the past.

Communism, for instance, is not a western institution. Among the Khasis of Assam, to whom I have referred, private property as an institution does not exist in theory even today. The clan as a whole owns the entire land. I am sure that similar instances can still be found in other parts of India and also in the past history of our country.

I think it necessary at this stage to warn my countrymen, and my young friends in particular, about the attack that is being made on nationalism from more than one quarter. From the point of view of cultural internationalism, nationalism is sometimes assailed as narrow, selfish and aggressive. It is also regarded as a hindrance to the promotion of internationalism in the domain of culture. My reply to the charge is that Indian nationalism is neither narrow, nor selfish, nor aggressive. It is inspired by the highest ideals of the human race, *viz.*, *Satyam* (the true), *Shivam* (the good), *Sundaram* (the beautiful). Nationalism in India has instilled into us truthfulness, honesty, manliness and the spirit of service and sacrifice. What is more, it has roused the creative faculties which for centuries had been lying dormant in our people and, as a result, we are experiencing a renaissance in the domain of Indian art.

Another attack is being made on nationalism from the point of view of international labour or international Communism. This attack is not only ill-advised but unconsciously serves the interests of our alien rulers.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

It would be clear to the man in the street that before we can endeavour to reconstruct Indian society on a new basis, whether socialistic or otherwise, we should first secure the right to shape our own density. As long as India lies prostrate at the feet of Britain, that right will be denied to us. It is, therefore, the paramount duty not only of nationalists but anti-nationalistic Communists to bring about the political emancipation of India as early as possible.

I have already hinted that I plead for a coalition between labour and nationlism (I am using 'labour' here in a wider sense to include the peasants as well). It has to be admitted that though we have passed resolutions from the Congress platform time and again regarding the desirability of organising labour, much has not been achieved in that direction.

If we view the programme of the Congress during the last few years we shall find that only in our *Khadi* programme have we been able to offer to our masses something which means bread and butter to them. *Khadi*, I am glad to say, has brought food to thousands and thousands of hungry mouths all over India. Given money and organisation, there is plenty of scope for pushing on Khadi. There are lakhs and lakhs of poor Indians living on the verge of starvation to whom *Khadi* can offer a means of subsistence. But the appeal of *Khadi* cannot be universal. We find from bitter experiences in some parts of Bengal that as soon as the masses are a little better off, their *Charkhas* lie idle and that the peasant who gets a better return from paddy or jute cultivation refuses to cultivate cotton.

Except when Congressmen have joined the Kisan movement, as in the Uttar Pradesh, or have taken up the question of jute cultivation, as in Bengal, or have undertaken a campaign for non-payment of taxes in order to resist illegal taxation or oppressive legislation, as in Gujarat, we have seldom been able to make a direct appeal to the economic interests of the masses. And until this is done—human nature being what it is—how can we expect the masses to join the freedom movement?

There is another reason why I consider it imperative that the Congress should be more alive to the interests of the masses. Mass consciousness has been roused in India, thanks to the extensive and intensive propaganda undertaken during the non-cooperation movement; and the mass movement cannot possibly be checked now. The only question is along what lines this mass consciousness should manifest itself. If the Congress neglects the masses it is inevitable that a sectional—and if I may say so, anti-national—movement will come into existence and class war among our people will appear even before we have achieved our political emancipation. It would be disastrous in the highest degree if we were to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

launch class war while we are all bed-fellows in slavery, in order that we may afford amusement to the common enemy. I regret to say that there is at present a tendency among some Indian labourities to belittle the Congress and to condemn the Congress programme. This recrimination should cease and the organised forces of labour and of the Congress should join hands for furthering the economic interests of the masses and promoting the cause of India's political emancipation.

Friends, you will pardon me if for one moment I ask you to lift your eyes from the realities of the present and attempt to scan the future that looms before us. It is desirable that we should search our hearts in order to find out what it is that we are running after, so that we and our succeeding generations may grow up in the light of that ideal and shape our course of action accordingly.

Speaking for myself, I stand for an independent Federal Republic. That is the ultimate goal which I have before me. India must fulfil her own destiny and cannot be content with colonial self-government or Dominion Home Rule. Why must we remain within the British Empire? India is rich in resources, human and material. She has outgrown the infancy which foreigners have been thrusting upon her, and can not only take care of herself but can function as an independent unit. India is no Canada or Australia or South Africa. Indians are an Oriental people, a coloured race, and there is nothing in common between India and Great Britain from which we may be led to think that Dominion Home Rule within the British Empire is a desirable consummation for India. Rather, India stands to lose by remaining within the Empire. Having been under British domination so long, it may be difficult for Indians to get rid of the inferiority complex in their relations with England. It may also be difficult to resist British exploitation so long as we remain an integral part of the British Empire.

The usual argument that India without the help of Britain cannot defend herself is puerile. It is the Indian army—much more than the British army—which is defending India today. If India is strong enough to fight the battles of England outside her borders—in Tibet, China, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and Flanders—she is certainly strong enough to defend herself from foreign aggression. Moreover, once India is able to free herself, the balance of power in the world will save India, as it has saved China. And if the League of Nations becomes a living organisation with some sanction behind it, invasion and aggression will be a thing of the past. While striving to attain liberty we have to note all its implications. You cannot free one half of your soul and keep the other half in bondage. You cannot introduce a light into a room and expect at the same time that some portion of it will remain dark. You

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

cannot establish political democracy and endeavour at the same time to resist democratisation of the society. No, my friends, let us not become a queer mixture of political democrats and social conservatives. Political institutions grow out of the social life of the people and are shaped by their social ideas and ideals. If we want to make India really great we must build up a political democracy on the pedestal of a democratic society. Privileges based on birth, caste or creed should go and equal opportunities should be thrown open to all irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The status of women should also be raised and women should be trained to take a larger and a more intelligent interest in public affairs.

While I do not condemn any patch-up work that may be necessary for healing communal sores, I would urge the necessity of discovering a deeper remedy for our communal troubles. It is necessary for the different religious groups to be acquainted with the traditions, ideals and history of one another, because cultural intimacy will pave the way towards communal peace and harmony. I venture to think that the fundamental basis of political unity between different communities lies in cultural rapprochement. As things stand today, the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive.

In order to facilitate cultural rapprochement a dose of secular and scientific training is necessary. Fanaticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy, and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education. This sort of education is useful in another way, in that it helps to rouse our economic consciousness. The dawn of economic consciousness spells the death of fanaticism. There is much more in common between a Hindu peasant and a Muslim peasant than between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim zamindar. The masses have only got to be educated wherein their economic interests be, and once they understand it, they will no longer consent to be pawns in communal feuds. By working from the cultural, educational and economic side, we can gradually undermine fanaticism and thereby render possible the growth of healthy nationalism in this country.

One of the most hopeful signs of the time is the awakening among the youth of this country. The movement has spread from one end of the country to the other end, as far as I am aware, has attracted not only young men but young women as well. The youth of this age have become self-conscious; they have been inspired by an ideal and are anxious to follow the call of their inner nature and fulfil their destiny. The movement is the spontaneous self-expression of the national soul, and on the course of this movement depends the nation's future weal. Our duty, therefore, is not to attempt to crush this new-born spirit but to lend it our support and guidance.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Friends! I would implore you to assist in the awakening of youth and in the organisation of the youth movement. Self-conscious youth will not only act, but will also dream; will not only destroy, but will also build. It will succeed where even you may fail; it will create for you a new India—and a free India—out of the failures, trials and experience of the past. And, believe me, if we are to rid India once for all of the canker of communalism and fanaticism, we have to begin work among our youth.

There is another aspect of our movement which has been somewhat neglected in this country—the women's movement. It is impossible for one-half of the nation to win liberty without the active sympathy and support of the other half. In all countries—and even in the Labour Party in England—women's organisations have rendered invaluable service. There are various non-political organisation among women in different parts of the country, but I venture to think that there is room for a country-wide political organisations among them. It should be the primary object of this organisation, which will be run by women alone, to carry on political propaganda among their sex and to help the work of the Indian National Congress.

Our benign rulers and our self-appointed advisers are in the habit of lecturing day after day on our unfitness for *Swaraj*. Some say that we must have more education before we can hope to be free; others maintain that social reform should precede political reform; still others urge that without industrial development India cannot be fit for *Swaraj*. None of these statements is true. Indeed it would be far more true to say that without political freedom—*i.e.*, without the power to shape our own destiny—we cannot have either compulsory free education or social reform or industrial advancement. If you demand education for your people as Shri Gokhale did long ago, the plea is put forward by Government that there is no money. If you introduce social legislation for the advancement of our countrymen , you find Miss Mayo's cousins of this side of the Atlantic arrayed against you and on the side of your social die-hards. When you are working yourself to death in order to bring about the economic and industrial regeneration of India you find to your infinite regret and surprise that your Imperial Banks, your Railways and your Stores Departments are least inclined to help your national enterprises. You pass resolutions in your Municipalities and in your Councils in favour of Prohibition and you find that the Government meets you with a stonewall of indifference or hostility. I have no doubt in my own mind that *Swaraj* and *Swaraj* alone is the sovereign remedy for all our ills. And the only criterion of our fitness for *Swaraj* is the will to be free.

How to rouse the national will within the shortest possible period is, then, the problem before us; our policies and programmes have to be drawn up with a view to this end. The Congress policy since 1921 has

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

been a dual policy of destruction and obstruction; of opposition and consolidation. We feel that the bureaucracy has entrenched itself in this country by erecting a network of organisations and institutions and by appointing a hierarchy of officials to run them. These are the seats of bureaucratic power and through them the bureaucracy has a grip on the very heart of the people. We have to storm these citadels of power and for that purpose we have to set up parallel institutions. These parallel organisations are our Congress offices. As our power and influence increase through the organisation of Congress Committees, we shall be able to capture the bureaucratic seats of power. We know from personal experience that in districts where Congress Committees are well organised, the capture of local bodies has been possible without any difficulty. The Congress offices are, therefore, the forts where we have to entrench ourselves and whence we have to stir out every day in order to raid the bureaucratic citadels. Congress Committees are our army, and no plan of campaign, however skilfully devised, can succeed unless we have a strong, efficient and disciplined army at our command.

Friends! You will remember that when, after the Gaya Congress of 1922, there was a tendecy among a large section of our countrymen to concentrate wholly on the constructive programme to the exclusion of everything else, Deshbandhu Das pointed out in the manifesto of the Swaraj Party that it was absolutely necessary to keep up a spirit of resistance to the bureaucracy. He firmly believed that without an atmosphere of opposition it was not possible to push on the constructive programme or to achieve success in any other direction. But this basic principle we often seem to forget. "Non-cooperation is barren"—"opposition has failed"—"obstruction is fruitless"—these are catchwords which mislead the unwary public. The most tragic in our character is that we do not look ahead; we are easily upset by failures. We lack the dogged tenacity of John Bull, and unlike him, we cannot therefore fight a long-lasting game.

I have often been asked how the end will come, how the bureaucracy will ultimately be forced to accede to our terms. I have no misgivings in this matter for I have already had a foretaste of what will come. The movement will reach its climax in a sort of general strike or country-wide *hartal* coupled with a boycott of British goods. Along with the strike or *hartal* to bring about which labour and the National Congress will heartily cooperate, there will be some form of civil disobedience because the bureaucracy is not likely to sit idle while a strike is going on. It is also possible that there may be non-payment of taxes in some form or other, but this is not essential. When the crisis is reached the average Britisher at home will feel that to starve India politically means economic starvation for him. And the bureaucracy in India will find that

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

it is impossible to carry on the administration in the face of a country-wide non-cooperation movement. The jails will be full as in 1921, and there will be general demoralisation within the ranks of the bureaucracy, who will no longer be able to count upon the loyalty and devotion of their servants and employees. There will be a paralysis of the administration and possibly of foreign trade and commerce. The bureaucracy will consider the situation as chaotic but, from the point of view of the people, the country will be organised, disciplined and determined. The bureaucracy will then be forced to yield to the demands of the people's representatives, for saving themselves from unnecessary trouble and anxiety and for restoring their trade with India.

Our immediate task is among other things to make the boycott of the Simon Commission complete and effective. We, Congressmen, have never accepted the pernicious preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919. This Act has been forced down our throats but we have never owed willing allegiance to it; in fact we have tried our level best to non-cooperate with it. We take our stand on the sacred and inviolable rights of men, and the principle of self-determination. We maintain that it is for India to frame her own constitution according to her needs, and it is for Britain to accept it *in toto*. This procedure has been followed not only in the case of countries that have won back their independence but in the case of the self-governing dominions within the British Empire including the Irish Free State.

The counterpart of this boycott, in fact its positive aspect, is the framing of a national constitution. The All Parties' Conference has taken this matter in hand and all lovers of India should wish the Conference complete success. The Secretary of State for India has in a fit of prompous pride challenged India to produce an agreed constitution. If there is a spark of honour and self-respect left in us, we should take up the gauntlet and give a fitting reply by producing a constitution.

I shall not tire you with any details of the constitution that should be drafted. I shall leave that task to our constitution farmers and shall content myself by referring to three cardinal points. These three points are as follows:

1. The Constitution should guarantee national sovereignty, *i.e.*, the sovereignty of the people. What we want is government of the people, by the people and for the people.
2. The constitution should be prefaced by a 'declaration of rights' which will guarantee the elementary rights of citizenship. Without a 'declaration of rights' a constitution is not worth the paper it is written on. Repressive laws, ordinances and regulations should be unknown in a free India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3. These should be a system of joint electorate. As a temporary arrangement, there may be reservation of seats if that is found necessary. But we should by all means insist on a joint electorate. Nationalism and separate electorates are self-contradictory. Separate electorates are wrong in principle and it is futile to attempt to build up a nation on a bad principle. We have had a bitter experience of separate electorates, and the sooner we get rid of them the better for us and for our country.

In order to enforce our national demand, it is necessary to take such steps as lie in our power, because a mere appeal to the sweet reasonableness of Britishers will be of no avail. Weak and unarmed though we are, Providence has in His mercy given us a weapon which we can use with great effect. This weapon is economic boycott, *i.e.*, boycott of British goods. It has been used with great effect in Ireland and in China. It was also used to great advantage during the *Swadeshi* movement nearly 20 years ago and partly during the non-cooperation movement. Boycott of British goods is necessary for the revival of *Swadeshi* and for effecting our political salvation.

It is also necessary that, while the political fight is going on, some of us would take up the work of village reorganisation. In a vast country like ours there is room for a variety of talent, and scope for diversity of temperament.

We must all be pained to notice that our masses, and particularly our labourers, are at present passing through a severe economic crisis. Drastic retrenchment is going on in the different Railways, and particularly in the railway workshops. I understand that several crores worth of railway materials are imported from Great Britain for our Railways whereas these could easily be manufactured in India if the workshops were extended. If an attempt were made to manufacture these goods in India, far from retrenching the existing labour staff, the administration would be able to provide employment for many more. But here again the interests of the Britishers and their industry have to be safeguarded at the cost of poor India.

It is the bounden duty of all Indians, and of Congressmen in particular, to come to the aid of labour in their hour of trial. Let us try and help them with all the means at our disposal.

Friends! We have reached a most critical stage in our nation's history and it behoves us to unite all our forces and make a bold stand against the powers that be. Let us all stand shoulder to shoulder and say with one heart and with one voice that our motto is, as Tennyson said through Ulysses, "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield".

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THE RAMGARH ADDRESS*

Comrades,

YOU HAVE done me a very great honour by inviting me to preside over the deliberations of the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh today. At the same time the responsibility you have thrown on my shoulders is onerous to a degree. This Conference is intended of focus all the anti-imperialist forces in the country that are now determined to resist a compromise with Imperialism. To preside over such a Conference is by no means an easy task. This task becomes all the more serious and arduous when the Chairman of the Reception Committee is no less a person than Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. It is in response to Swamiji's clarion call that we have assembled here today.

Comrades, I shall fail in my duty if before proceeding to discuss the problem of the day, I do not pay a tribute to those who are responsible for organising this Conference. I happen to know something of the obstacles and the difficulties that had to be overcome before this Conference could meet and I can, therefore, speak with a certain amount of authority. These obstacles and difficulties were of a two-fold character. In the first place, there were physical and material obstacles and difficulties to be overcome at Ramgarh before adequate arrangements for the Conference could be made. In the second place, persistent hostile propaganda all over the country had to be faced and counteracted by the organisers of the Conference. ***The most surprising and painful of this propaganda was the determined endeavour of a section of Leftists (or shall I say pseudo-Leftists) to make this Conference impossible by openly condemning it and also by trying to sabotage it.*** As a matter of fact, during the last few months it has become more and more evident that a number of Leftists have begun to play the role of apologists of the Rightists—but such a phenomenon is not new in history. Man lives to learn and the longer he lives, the more does he realise the aptness of the oft-repeated truism that history repeats itself.

It has been argued by the apologists of the Congress Working Committee that the Congress is itself the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference and that such Conference is, therefore, unnecessary. The

*Text of the Presidential Address at the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference, Ramgarh, Bihar, 19 March, 1940. (Emphasis ours).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

resolution of the last meeting of the Congress Working Committee which met at Patna is held up before our eyes in order to demonstrate that the Congress has adopted an uncompromising policy. One cannot but admire the naivete of such an argument, but is it meet and proper for politicians and political workers to be a so very naive?

One has only to go through the whole of the Patna resolution and particularly through the latter portion of it in order to realise that there are loopholes which detract from the intrinsic value of that resolution. No sooner was this resolution passed than Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the statement that the door had not been banged on future negotiations for a settlement. Mahatmaji's subsequent lengthy remarks on Civil Disobedience do not assure us by any means that the period of struggle has commenced. In fact, what has distressed and bewildered us during the last year and a half is the fact that while on the one hand red-hot resolutions are passed and statements issued by members of the Congress Working Committee, simultaneously other remarks are made and statements issued either by Mahatma Gandhi or by other Rightist leaders which create a totally different impression on the average mind. Then there is the moot question as to whether the Patna resolution would have been passed at all, but for the pressure exerted by the Left during the last six months.

The country eagerly awaits a clear and unequivocal declaration from the Congress Working Committee that the door has finally been banged on all talks of a compromise with Imperialism. But will this declaration be forthcoming? If so, when?

Comrades, those who aver that the Congress is the biggest Anti-Compromise Conference perhaps suffer from shortness of memory and their brains consequently need refreshing. Have they forgotten that as soon as the War began, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to Simla without caring to consult the Congress Working Committee and informed His Excellency the Viceroy that he was in favour of rendering unconditional help to Great Britain in the prosecution of the War? Do they not realise that Mahatma Gandhi being the sole dictator of the Congress, his personal views necessarily have a far-reaching implication? Have they forgotten that since the outbreak of War, the Congress Working Committee has side-tracked the main issue—namely, our demand for *Purna Swaraj*—by putting forward a demand for a fake Constituent Assembly? Have they forgotten that some prominent Rightist leaders, including members of the Congress Working Committee, have been continuously whittling down the implications of a Constituent Assembly and that they have gone so far as to accept separate electorate and the existing franchise for the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Legislative Assembly as the basis for electing the Constituent Assembly of their dreams? Have they forgotten that after the resignation of Congress ministries, several Congress Ministers have been showing an inordinate desire to get back to office? Have they forgotten the consistent attitude which Mahatma Gandhi has adopted during the last six months in the matter of a compromise with the British Government? And do they not know that behind the smoke-screen of hot phrases, negotiations for a compromise have been going on apace?

Unfortunately for us, the British Government have ceased to take the Congress seriously and have formed the impression that however much Congressmen may talk, they will not ultimately show fight. Since September 1939, there has not been any dearth of resolutions and statements. Some members of the Congress Working Committee opine that these resolutions have impressed the world. But whether they have impressed the world or not, they have certainly not impressed the British, who are essentially a realistic race. During the last six months we have offered them only words and words and we have received the time-worn reply that so long as the Hindu-Muslim problem remains unsolved, *Purna Swaraj* is unthinkable.

Since September last India has been passing through a rare crisis when men's minds have fallen a prey to doubt and vacillation. The first to fall were the leaders themselves and the demoralisation that seized them has been spreading as a contagion throughout the land. A determined and widespread effort is needed if we are to stem the rot. To make this effort really effective, our activities should be focused at an all-India conference of all those who are determined to have no truck with Imperialism.

The crisis that has overtaken us may be rare in Indian history, but it is nothing new in the history of the world. Such crises generally appear in periods of transition. In India we are now ringing down the curtain on an age that is passing away, while we are at the same time ushering in the dawn of a new era. ***The age of Imperialism is drawing to a close and the era of freedom, democracy and Socialism looms ahead of us.*** India, therefore, stands today at one of the crossroads of history. It is for us to share, if we so will, the heritage that awaits the world.

It is not to be wondered at that men's minds should be bewildered when the old structure is crashing under its own weight and the new is yet to rise out of the ashes of the old. But let us not lose faith in ourselves, or in our countrymen or in humanity in this hour of uncertainty. To lose faith would be a calamity of the first magnitude.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Such crises constitute the supreme test of a nation's leadership. The present crisis has put our own leadership to the test and the latter has been unfortunately found wanting. It is only by analysing and exposing the causes of its failure that we can learn the lesson of history and lay the foundation of our future effort and achievement. But such analysis and exposure will necessarily be painful to all concerned, though there is means of avoiding it.

I may digress at this stage and draw an analogy with similar crises in other climes and ages. When the October Revolution broke out in Russia in 1917, nobody had a clear conception as to how the revolution should be directed. Most of the Bolsheviks were then thinking in terms of a coalition with other parties. It was left to Lenin to denounce all coalitions and give out the slogan—"All Power to the Soviet". ***Who knows what turn Russian history would have taken but for this timely lead of Lenin's during a period of doubt and vacillation?*** Lenin's unerring instinct (or intuition) which ultimately proved to be prophetic, saved Russia from disaster and from a tragedy similar to that which overtook Spain the other day.

Let us now take a contrary case. Italy in 1922 was to all intents and purposes, ripe for socialism. All that she needed was an Italian Lenin. But the man of the hour did not arrive and the opportunity slipped out of Socialist hands. It was immediately seized by the Fascist leader, Benito Mussolini. By his march to Rome and his seizure of power, Italian history took an altogether different turn and Italy ultimately went Fascist instead of going socialist. Doubt and vacillation had seized the Italian leaders and so they failed. Mussolini had one supreme virtue which not only saved him but brought him the laurels of victory. He knew his mind and he was not afraid to act. That constituted the essence of leadership.

Today our leaders are wobbling and their vacillation has demoralised a section of Leftists as well. `Unity', `National Front', `Discipline'—These have become cheap slogans which have no relation to reality. Befogged by such attractive slogans, they seem to have forgotten that the supreme need of the hour is a bold, uncompromising policy leading us on to a national struggle. Whatever strengthens us for this purpose is to be welcomed. Whatever weakens us is to be eschewed. Unity which ties us to the apron-strings of rightist politicians is by no means a blessing. We might as well induce the Congress to effect unity with the Liberal Federation—if unity is to be desired under all conditions and circumstances.

In the present crisis, the most distressing phenomenon is the disruption within the ranks of those who were hitherto regarded as

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Leftists. The immediate future will prove to be the acid test of Leftism in India. Those who will be found wanting will be soon exposed as pseudo-Leftists. The members of the Forward Bloc, too, will have to demonstrate by their work and conduct that they are really forward and dynamic. It may be that in the ordeal that is ahead of us, some of those who are branded as Rightists today, will prove to be genuine Leftists— in action, I mean.

A word is necessary here in order to explain what we mean by Leftism. The present age is the anti-imperialist phase of our movement. Our main task in this age is to end Imperialism and win national Independence for the Indian people. When freedom comes, the age of national reconstruction will commence and that will be the socialist phase of our movement. ***In the present phase of our movement, Leftists will be those who will wage an uncompromising fight with imperialism.*** Those who waver and vacillate in their struggle against Imperialism— those who tend towards a compromise with it—cannot by any means be Leftists. In the next phase of our movement, Leftism will be synonymous with socialism—but in the present phase, the words `Leftist' and `Anti-imperialist' would be interchangeable.

The problem of the hour is—"Will India still remain under the thumb of the Rightists or will she swing to the Left, once for all?" The answer to this can be furnished only by the Leftists themselves. If they adopt a bold, uncompromising policy in their struggle with Imperialism, regardless of all dangers, difficulties and obstacles, then the Leftists will make history and India will go Left.

To those who may still be thinking of a compromise, the recent history of Ireland and the sequel to the Anglo-Irish Treaty should prove highly instructive and edifying.

A compromise with Imperialism will mean that an anti-imperialist national struggle will soon be converted into a civil war among the people themselves. Would this be desired from any point of view?

In the event of a compromise being effected with Imperialism in this country, Indian Leftists will in future have to fight not only Imperialism, but its new-fangled Indian allies as well. This will necessarily mean that the national struggle with Imperialism will be converted into a civil war among the Indians themselves.

Let us take time by the forelock and let us act while it is not too late. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati has sounded the clarion call. Let us respond to it with all the strength and courage that we possess. From this Conference let us send out a warning to both Imperialism and its Indian allies. The success of this Conference should mean the death-knell of compromise with Imperialism.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Before we part, let us also set up a permanent machinery for implementing the resolutions of this Conference and for waging an uncompromising, war with Imperialism. Everybody now realises that if the Working Committee of the Congress does not give the call for launching a national struggle, others will have to do so. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things for this Conference to set up a permanent machinery for undertaking this responsibility—should the Working Committee fail us in this crisis. I hope and trust that the deliberations of this Conferences will be a prelude to work and struggle on a nation-wide scale and on an All-India front.

Inquilab Zindabad

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE*

COMRADES ! EARLY in May 1939, the Forward Bloc of the Indian National Congress was inaugurated in Calcutta following a momentous session of the All-India Congress Committee. In the last week of June 1939, the first session of the All-India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay and the constitution and programme of the Bloc were adopted there. Since then, a year has rolled by—a year which will be memorable not only in the history of India but in the history of the whole world. We are, therefore, meeting at a most opportune moment. We shall have to do a great deal of heart-searching as well as stock-taking. We shall have to determine our course of action in the crisis which has overtaken India and the world, a crisis which is deepening and worsening, not only from day-to-day but also from hour-to-hour.

The first question which I shall pose before you is: "Has our policy and line of action been a correct one? And have we acted in the best interests of the country by launching the Forward Bloc?" To that my reply is: "Most certainly, yes." I shall remind you that we were constrained to start the Forward Bloc in the light of *four* considerations. The Right Wing had definitely told us that they would not work in cooperation with the Leftists in future, and they had rejected the proposal of a composite cabinet which was our demand. *Secondly,* Mahatma Gandhi and the right wing had told us that a national struggle in the near future was out of the question. *Thirdly,* the attempt to consolidate the anti-imperialist and radical elements in the Congress under the name of the Left Bloc had been given up by the Socialists and Communists. Consequently, a further attempt at Left consolidation could be made only by us and, for that, the Forward Bloc had become indispensably necessary. *Fourthly,* the Right-wingers had already consolidated themselves under the aegis of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and any further delay on our part would have meant the strangling of the Leftist elements in the Congress by the Rightists.

It was clear in 1939 that most of those who had entered the Congress as Leftists in 1920 and 1921, and had retained the leadership of the Congress in their hands for nearly two decades, had ceased to be revolutionary or even radical. Any further political progress under such circumstances presupposed a consolidation of all anti-imperialist, radical and progressive forces in the country and particularly in the Congress.

---

*Presidential address at the All-India Forward Bloc Conference in Nagpur, June 18, 1940. (Emphasis Ours).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Towards the end of April 1939, when I was seriously considering the idea of resigning the presidentship of the Congress and inaugurating the Forward Bloc, I had an interesting and important discussion with a very prominent Leftist leader of the Congress who has since then thrown himself into the arms of the Gandhiites. He advised me to refrain from either course and he added that since an international storm was brewing, we should avoid everything in the nature of a split within the Congress. I replied saying that since a war was inevitable in the near future, it was all the more necessary that the Leftists should be organised and prepared in advance, so that in the event of the Rightists developing cold feet in a war situation, we at least could do something off our own bat. Differences had become so fundamental between the Right Wing and Left Wing that a split—whether permanent or temporary—had become inevitable. That being the case, it was desirable that the internal crisis should come and should be transcended before the external or international crisis overtook us. I added that if I accepted my friend's advice and lay low for the present, the consequences would be far worse for us when the international crisis appeared. In such a crisis, we would never agree with the Rightists. But many people would blame us for causing a split, if we attempted to act on our own at that time. Moreover, if we did want to act independently then we would have no organisation behind us to fall back on. Consequently, the argument of my friend only strengthened my case.

Looking back on the last twelve months, can we not claim that events have justified our policy and line of action? Barring the Kisan Sabha of Swami Sahajanand (and Prof. Ranga, Comrade Yajnik, etc.) and the Forward Bloc, who is there to stand up to the Rightists today? The Left Consolidation Committee which came into existence in June 1939, after the formation of the Forward Bloc, has disintegrated by now. ***The Royists (or Radical Leaguers), the Congress Socialists and the Communists (or National Fronters) have in turn deserted the Left Consolidation Committee and only the Kisan Sabha and Forward Bloc have been functioning as the spearhead of the left movement in this country.*** This was evident when we held the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in March 1940. There we found that the Royists, Congress Socialists and National Fronters boycotted that Conference and threw in their lot with the Gandhiites.

There can be little doubt today that if there had been no Forward Bloc and no Kisan Sabha, no voice would have been raised against the policy and the line of action pursued by the Gandhiites during the last 12 months.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

We shall now consider another question: What has been our actual achievement during the past year?"

In the first place, we can claim to have successfully resisted the tendency towards constitutionalism and compromise within the ranks of the Congress. Thanks to our efforts, the Congress Ministries had to vacate office as a protest against the policy of the British Government. If they had not done so, they would have been carrying out the war policy of the Government of India, as agents of British Imperialism. In spite of all efforts made hitherto, no compromise has yet been made with the British Government, and for this we can legitimately claim some credit.

Secondly, we have so far frustrated all attempts to secure the cooperation of the Congress in the prosecution of the war. Friends will remember that in September 1939, when His Excellency the Viceroy invited Mahatma Gandhi for a talk at Simla on the war situation, the latter gave out that he was of the view that India should give unconditional help to Great Britain during the present war. This was reiterated by Mahatmaji in a Press statement issued soon after the above interview. Nevertheless, up till now, the Congress Working Committee, which usually follows Gandhiji blindly, has ignored his views on such an all-important issue. Would the same thing have happened if there had been no Kisan Sabha and no Forward Bloc?

Thirdly, we can perhaps claim that we have succeeded in creating an atmosphere of struggle. Today we find Congress leaders drilling in shirts and shorts and Congress Committees being converted into "Satyagraha" Committees. Moreover, the Rightist leaders have been constantly talking of a struggle. Would all these have taken place, if there had been no Forward Bloc and if the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh had not shown which way the wind of public opinion was blowing? There is no doubt that today the talk of a struggle is everywhere in the air and the more our people talk of it, the more will they move away from a compromise.

Lastly, we can claim that at Ramgarh we launched our struggle with such strength and resources as we possessed. During the last three months a large number of our fellow-workers, including men of outstanding influence in the country, have been arrested and incarcerated. Nine members of the All-India Working Committee of the Forward Bloc are at present in prison or internment. In addition to them, leaders of the Kisan Sabha headed by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, Prof. Ranga and others, are behind the bars.

The national struggle we launched at Ramgarh has been steadily gaining in strength and volume. The campaign has made considerable

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

headway in Bihar and the United Provinces. In Bengal, the struggle was launched as early as January 1940 over the question of civil liberty, which had been violated by the drastic ordinances promulgated by the Government in September 1939. Thanks to the civil disobedience movement launched by the Bengal Congress, we have restored in a large measure the *status quo* which existed prior to September 1939. The special session of the Bengal Provincial Political Conference which met at Dacca on the 25th and 26th May, 1940 took stock of the situation in the province and formulated a plan for intensifying the struggle and widening its scope. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will give effect to this plan.

Before I proceed to deal with the international situation, I shall refer to one or two criticisms which are constantly levelled at us. We are told, for instance, that we have created a split in the Congress. The fact, however, is that it is the Gandhiites who have created a split by refusing to cooperate with the Leftists. We have all along been strongly in favour of joint action and a composite cabinet for ensuring such action.

We are also told that we have brought disruption within the ranks of the Leftists. But it is not we who have caused disruption or disunity. The Royists, the Congress Socialists and the National Fronters (or Communists) have, one after another, deserted the Left Consolidation Committee.

We stand today exactly where we did twelve months ago. During these months, we have passed through an ordeal. Suffering, persecution, banter, ridicule—such has been our lot. But we have gone ahead along the path of uncompromising struggle in a most unflinching manner. Numerous fellow-workers of ours have been persecuted by the Congress High Command and in the province of Bengal, owing to the disaffiliation of the Provincial Congress Committee, all Congressmen of our way of thinking have been virtually thrown out of the Congress.

The question which will naturally arise at this stage is: "Why have the Royists and others deserted us?" So far as I can judge, they are afraid of being expelled from the Congress and they feel, perhaps, that once outside the Congress they will be completely lost. What amuses one, however, is that these comrades had been hoping to fight the Rightists and had not anticipated that before being defeated by the Leftists, the Rightists would do their worst and would do all in their power to maintain their supremacy in the Congress. ***The backbone, the stamina and the toughness that are needed in order to fight the Rightists successfully, these Leftists (or shall I say***

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

pseudo-Leftist?) comrades do not possess. We are now passing through a phase of our struggle when history itself will put all of us to the test and declare to the world as to who the genuine Leftists in India are.

We are also told that without the help of the Gandhiites the struggle we have launched will prove to be a failure. To this allegation, our answer is as follows: it is too early to say whether our struggle will be successful or not. That will depend on whether the masses will join it or not. It always takes some time to get the masses to really round the banner of a non-violent struggle. Let us, therefore, hold ourselves in patience yet a while.

But supposing for argument's sake that the struggle will fail, does that mean that it should not have been launched? Could we not argue, on the opposite side, that the campaigns of 1921, 1930 and 1932 should not have been launched because they did not bring us *Swaraj*? Failures are often the pillars of success. So what does it matter if we fail for the fourth time? Not to try at all is more dishonourable than making the attempt and failing to achieve success. The whole world is watching us today. What will the free nations of the world think of us if we miss the golden opportunity that has now come—an opportunity that is rare in the lifetime of any nation? But nobody will think ill of us if we fight and then fail.

There is another point which we should not overlook either. Shall we not consider what posterity will think of us twenty or fifty years hence if we do not acquit ourselves manfully today? What do people today think of the leaders who mismanaged the affairs of the country between 1914 and 1919? ***I, therefore, make bold to say that if we do not rise to the occasion and join the struggle without delay, neither history nor posterity will ever pardon us.***

Twelve months ago when the Forward Bloc was formed we were obsessed, as it were, with the idea of the coming struggle and how to prepare for it in advance. At that time we did not know how far, if at all, outside events and international developments would aid us in our efforts to win *Purna Swaraj*. Consequently, we had to make "self-reliance" our motto in life and action.

Today, the situation has altered to some extent. In the war between rival imperialisms, the old ones have been faring very badly indeed. During the last few weeks the Germans have carried on the campaign with lightning rapidity. Kings and Kingdoms have toppled down in the course of a few days and the German Army—the Reichswehr—has proceeded to the gates of Paris and occupied that queen of cities in a way which appears to the layman as a miracle in military warfare.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

What has been happening in Europe in a kaleidoscopic manner has had its inevitable repercussions on India.

The wheels of history are grinding on, quite regardless of what we may be doing in India. But it order to fully utilise the opportunity which international events have presented to us, we must have sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves. If India could speak with one voice today, our demand would indeed be well-nigh irresistible. It follows, as a consequence, that while we should think of intensifying the national struggle and widening its scope, we should at the same time to develop national unity and solidarity to the maximum limit.

National unity will presuppose unity within the Congress on the basis of a dynamic programme of struggle and at the same time unity between the Congress and other organisations like the Muslim League.

If we can develop sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves in good time, we may very well hope that even if the country passes through a struggle and even if catastrophic events take place in Europe, the transference of power from the hands of British Imperialism to those of the Indian people will take place in a peaceful manner.

It is not necessary that the Indian revolution should be a bloody one or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible; and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people are united and are determined to have their freedom.

My own suggestion to you is that we should immediately go out into the country with the rallying cry—"**All power to the Indian people**". This will galvanise the masses in a moment. In order to put forward this demand in an effective and irresistible manner, we should leave no stone unturned in our effort to attain national unity. This effort will necessitate the setting up of a machinery which will preserve harmony and goodwill among the people under all circumstances. Such a machinery will be provided by a Citizen's Defence Corps organised on an all-party basis.

But such a Corps should be quite independent of the Government. Our Citizen's Defence Corps will only aim at preserving internal peace, harmony and goodwill. The question of defending the country militarily from nay other force or power is one which should concern the Government only.

Before coming to the epilogue of this address, which will be a consideration of the international situation of today and tomorrow, I should like to remind you of the historical role of the Forward Bloc. The Bloc has come into being as the result of historical necessity. It

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

is not the creation of an individual or of a group of individuals. So long as it will serve a historical purpose, it will live and thrive—despite all obstacles, internal or external.

We should also bear in mind that the Forward Bloc will have a role to play in the post-struggle phase of our history. It will have to preserve liberty after winning it and it will have to build up a new India and a happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism.

Let us not commit the fatal mistake of thinking that our mission will be over, once we win our freedom. ***The organisations or party that wins freedom must undertake the responsibilities of post-war reconstruction. Only in this manner will continuity of progress be maintained.***

Let us now proceed to consider the international situation as we find it today and as it will probably be tomorrow. After reading the outspoken statements of Messrs. Winston Churchill and Paul Reynaud we cannot blink the prime facts of the situation as they emerge from the quick tempo of war. Every day makes it more clear that M. Paul Reynaud's summing up of the situation in the Chamber of Deputies (that victory for the Allies could only be brought about by a miracle) was a true measure of the military conditions then obtaining. Dark as was the picture then, it has grown darker since. The prospect today is positively bleak. And when one remembers this is a totalitarian war, it dawns on us how impossible is the situation in which the losing side is placed.

We may also concede that Monsieur Reynaud's ringing resolution "to intensify the struggle and not to give up" is brave and resolute, and his words not empty herocis. For all that, he fails to convince when he says: "We will shut ourselves into one of our provinces and if we are driven out we will go to North Africa and if necessary into our possessions in America".

Today we have every right to examine the stark realities of the war as it has developed until we see them in the white light of clarity. ***The leaders of the French and British peoples have been frank. We should also be frank with ourselves.***

The cause of this Allies' continuous defeat seems to be lodged some-where in their system. It was a system which Mr. Clement Attlee, speaking, I believe, for the last time from the Opposition benches, said had failed to meet the need of the crisis.

It was the fundamental weakness of a system in which slavery and freedom existed side by side that had resulted in British being "decisively beaten" on the propaganda front. This was, what the *Daily Mail* said was happening. Propaganda radiocasts from the Reich, it

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

wrote at the end of March, were "influencing not only the civilian population of Britain, but also our armed forces". Goebbels, it asserted, had had a walk-over.

But we are not so much interested in a particular method as in the basic principles of action. And we are not to be dissuaded from pressing home our demand for the admission of our fundamental rights by a clouding of the issues and the cry of `saboteur!' We have too long been taken in by the clever imperialist propaganda.

We cannot but ask ourselves where we stand in this international flux. ***Some of our statesmen, it seems have been possessed with the dream of India being converted into a bastion of democratic resistance against the dictators' hordes. What a grotesque picture!***

Almost the whole of the English Channel coast on the French side is in the hands of the Germans, making ordinary communications difficult and hazardous and the transport of troops all but impossible. Some of the best industrial regions of France are in the hands of the invaders. Paris, the heart of France, has ceased to throb. In the Champagne region a powerful German drive is developing to isolate the Maginot Line from the rest of France. In the south-east the powerful and fresh Italian legions are pressing. And everywhere the reiterating French forces are harried by the admittedly superior air arm of the admittedly superior Reichswehr. Such is the gloomy picture of the Allied position in Europe. From the Northern Arctic regions to the Atlantic, the Nazi eagle has spread its wings in an unbroken line. It is not surprising we should be told that there is no cause for optimism.

When the Nazi hordes crossed the German frontier into Holland and Belgium only the other day with the cry of "nach Paris" on their lips, who could have dreamt that they would reach their objective so soon? A miracle in military warfare has happened, as it were, before our eyes, and for an analogy one has to turn to the Napoleonic wars or to the catastrophe at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Whatever the French High Command may say, in the face of mechanised transport, innumerable tanks and dive-bombers, no resistance worth the name is possible after the capitulation of Paris. The days of French warfare are over.

But what next? The British people are famous for their dogged pertinacity and their unflinching nerves. They are now confronted with what is perhaps the severest ordeal in their history. Let us see how they will acquit themselves.

India must in this grave crisis think of herself first. If she can win freedom now and then save herself, she will best serve the cause

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of humanity. It is for the Indian people to make an immediate demand for the transference of power to them through a Provisional National Government. No constitutional difficulties can be put forward by the British Government with a view to resisting this demand, because legislation for this purpose can be put through Parliament in twenty-four hours. When things settle down inside India and abroad, the Provisional National Government will convene a Constituent Assembly for farming a full-fledged Constitution for this country.

Friends, these are some of my thoughts and suggestions. I hope and trust that you will give them due consideration. In any case, I appeal to you not to leave Nagpur till you have in your pockets a concrete plan of action for winning *Purna Swaraj* in the immediate future.

Let us proclaim once again—"All power the Indian people here, and now".

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

S. Majumdar

BOOKS

Abul Kalam. *Subhas Bose: strategic concepts and diplomatic thought* New Delhi: Manohar, 1997. 160p.

Anand, Y.P. *Birth of free India's national anthem: a gift from Netaji Subhas Bose.* New Delhi: National Gandhi Museum, 1997. 48p.

Anand, Y.P. *The essential relationship between Netaji Subhas Bose and Mahatma Gandhi: the supreme martyrs in India's freedom struggle.* New Delhi: National Gandhi Museum, 1997. 47p.

Bhattacharya, Shubhabrata, *Subhas Chandra Bose: Pioneer of Indian Planning.* New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1997. 144p.

Bhattachaya, S.N. *Subhas Chandra Bose in self-exile his finest hour.* Delhi: Metropolitian, 1975. 130p.

Bose, Mihir. *The lost hero: a biography of Subhas Bose.* London: Quarter Books, 1882. 318p.

Bose, Nimai Sadhan. *The Indian Awakening and Bengal.* Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhya, 1969.

Bose, Pradip. *Subhas Bose and India Today: a new tryst with destiny?* New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1999. 312p.

Bose, Sisir K. *A Beacon Across Asia: a biography of Subhas Chandra Bose.* Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973. 340p.

Bose, Sisir Kumar. *Netaji: a pictorial biography.* Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1979.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Crossroads: being the works of Subhas Chandra Bose,* 1938-40. Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1961. 367p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *An Indian pilgrim: an unfinished autobiography and collected letters 1897-1921.* Bombay: Asia, 1965. 199p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *The Indian Struggle, 1920-34.* Calcutta: Thacker, Soink, 1948. 440p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *The Indian Struggle, 1920-42.* Bombay: Asia, 1964. 476p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Life and times of Subhas Chandra Bose, as told in his words.* compiled by Madan Gopal. Delhi: Vikas, 1978. 35p.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *On to Delhi or speeches and writings of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.* edited by G.C. Jain. Delhi: Saraswati Pustak Mandir, 1946. 156p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Selected speeches.* Delhi: Ministry of information and Broadcasting, 1962. 241p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose.* Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1983. 261p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Through Congress Eyes.* Allahabad: Kitabistan, n.d. 243p.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *Netaji: Collected Works.* Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1980. v.

Chatterjee, Subhas Chandra. *Subhas Chandra Bose: Man, Mission and Means.* Calcutta: Minerva, 1989. 153p.

Congress President: *Speeches, articles and letters: January 1038-May 1939: Subhas Chandra Bose.* edited by Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose. Delhi: Oxford Univ, Press, 1995. 306p.

Das, Hari Hara. *Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National movement.* New Delhi: Sterling, 1983.

Forgotten images: reflections and reminiscences of Subhas Chandra Bose. edited by T.R. Sareen. Delhi: S.S. Publisher. 1997. 300p.

Ghosh, K.K. *The Indian National Army: second front of the Indian Independence movement.* Meerut: Meenakhi Prakashan, 1969.

Iyar, S.A. *Upto him a witness: the story of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in East Asia.* Bombay: Thacker, 1951. 342p.

Kurti, Kitty. *Subhas Chandra Bose as I knew him.* Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1994. 230p.

Letters, articles, speeches and statements 1993-1937: Subhas Chandra Bose. Edited by Sisir Kumar Bose and Sugata Bose. Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1994. 450p.

Ravindra Kumar. *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: correspondence and selected documents: 1930-42.* New Delhi: Inter-India, 1992. 436p.

Sahgal Lakshmi, *A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist,* New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1997, 182p.

Subhas Chandra Bose: the Man and his Vision. Edited by Muchkund Dubey. New Delhi: Har-Anand, 1998, 146p.

Toye, Hugh. *The Springing Tiger: Subhash Chandra Bose.* Bombay: Jaico Pub. House, 1984.

ARTICLES

Bose, Ashok Kumar. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Corporation of Calcutta. *Calcutta Municipal Gazette,* 102(3), 8 June 1985, P. 54-57.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Krishna. Important Women in Netaji's life. *Illustrated Weekly of India.* 13th August and 30th August 1972.

Bose, Sisir Kumar. Speech at the celebration of Golden Jubilee of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, Bombay 24 November 1993. *The Oracle,* 16(10), January 1994.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. Why Provisional Government. *The Oracle,* 15(1), January 1993.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. To Mahatma Gandhi: broadcast address over the Rangoon Radio, 6 July 1944. *The Oracle,* 16(1), January 1994.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. Proclamation on the Crossing of the Burma-India frontier by Indian National Army on 18 March 1944. *The Oracle.* 16(1), 1994.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. Special Order of the day, 9 February 1944. *The Oracle,* 16(1), 1994.

Chakraborti, Radha Raman. A Centenary Tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. *Kurukshetra,* 45(10). July 1997. p.59-60.

Chaudhuri, Nirad. Subhas Chandra Bose: His Legacy and Legend. *Pacific Affairs.* 26 (4), December 1953.

Chaudhuri, Nirad. Subhas Chandra Bose. *The Illustrated Weekly of India.* 18th September. 1955.

Gangal, S.C. Netaji Subhas Bose: Patriot, Planner and Nation Builder. *Yojana,* 40(4), Apr 1996, p.15-16, 30.

International Image of Subhas Bose. *Indian Express.* 23rd Jan. 1967.

Mukherji, Indra Nath. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Socialist Thought. *Mainstream,* 36(5), 24 January 1998, p.30-33.

Safrani, Abid Husan. The Men from Imphal. *The Oracle.* 15(1), January 1993.

Saha, Panchanan. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Working Class Movement. *Mainstream,* 36(5), 24 January 1998, p.25-29.

Saha, Panchanan, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Germany. *Mainstream,* 35(7), 25 January 1997, p.21-23.

Sahgal, P.K. The Indian National Army. *The Oracle* 15(10) January 1993.

Sokthanka, Y.N. The Subhas We Knew at Cambridge. *Indian Express.* 24 and 28 January 1970.

3195

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Shri. M.C. Gupta, IAS (Retd.), is Director, IIPA, New Delhi.

Dr. Jaytilak Guha Roy is Reader in Criminal Justice Administration at IIPA, New Delhi.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE